■Sports / A11
Alein chasing career milestones

Saturday Special
Women make their mark at Berlin filmfest

■Health
Dietary regimen to keep out of cancer's way

■News / A2
Palace warns France on gunboat diplomacy

■Super
KC Concepcion: Pinay pride in Paris

Justice chides Comelec for 3 separate FPJ opinions

By Philip C. Tubeza

A MINORITY member of the Supreme Court has chided the Commission on Elections for delivering three of its commissioners to the opposition camp in the disqualification case against opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

JURISDICTION, A12

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, February 21, 2004 ■ 30 pages / vol. 19 / no. 75

www.inq7.net

7 gov't execs fail lifestyle check, face charges

By Armando M. Nocum

A JAIL after a presidential candidate assailed it for allegedly bowing to pressure from administration. The Presidential Anti-Graft Commission announced that it had charged with graft seven officials who supposedly failed the government's lifestyle check.

CHARGES, A12

'Legitimacy a non-issue'

4 Friends of Court may prove to be friendly to FPJ

By Philip C. Tubeza and Carlos Pablo

ILLEGITIMACY is irrelevant.

The "friends of the court" invited by the Supreme Court to shed light on the disqualification case against presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. the other day proved friendly to the movie actor's contention that he was a natural-born Filipino citizen.

But they also maintained that Poe needed to prove that his father recognized him as his customer.

Retired SC Justice Vicente Mendoza, an constitutional commissioner Joaquin Bernas S.J., former University of the Philippines College of Law dean Merlin Magallona, and UP law professor Ruben Balane argued that Poe's alleged illegitimacy did not bar him from being a natural-born citizen.

Bernas led the charge in rebutting the anti-Poe petitioners, and four of the solicitor general, but Poe was not a natural-born citizen because of his alleged illegitimacy.

"It is not the fault or the child that his parents did not their license. After all, even the child of the Sultano of political rights for no fault of his own." To disqualify an illegitimate child from holding an important public office is to punish him for the indiscretion of his parents. There is neither justice nor rationality in that," Bernas said.

Bernas said that if the father recognized, through the birth records, his blood relation or filiation to the illegitimate child at birth, then the child could be considered a natural-

RECOGNITION, A10

LEGAL brainstorm: Ruben Balane, Fr. Joaquin Bernas...and Vicente Mendoza are invited by the high court to present their opinions on the Poe disqualification case. Not in photo is former UP College of Law dean, Merlin Magallona.

Longest ever hearing in high court's history

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE JUSTICES had fallibles.

A forty-two-hour oral argument that lasted for more than three days helped keep the Supreme Court justices going through 12 hours of oral arguments on Thursday—the high court's longest ever hearing in its history.

"They ordered four fallibles," said Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan Jr., whose island what the justices had coming a brief 20-minute break in the hearing, which stretched from Thursday afternoon to the early hours of Friday morning. The high court heard the petitioners and the respondents on the disqualification case against opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. It also invited four "friends of the court" to file oral arguments.

Khan said the justices did not have a full meal and settled only for a brief snack since they had to continue with the deliberations, which he said was the longest in the court's hundred year existence.

"This is the first time in the history of oral arguments that it lasted for four long. This shows the sense of urgency with which the court is treating this particular case," Khan said.

The arguments started at 1:15 p.m. on Thursday and ended when Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. banged the gavel at 1:30 a.m. on Friday.

While the justices had sometimes heated discussions with contending parties in the case and the four amici curiae, some of the people watching from the gallery tried hard to keep warm because of the cold temperature ensured by the uncontrolled air-conditioning system.

They rubbed and blew on their hands while

LONGEST, A10

FPJ: Debate is just all talk

By Christine O. Avendaño, Helen Grace, Ben Hsien Ebrao, and Juliet Labog-Javellana

BOMBOMBOM, Nueva Vizcaya—Moving shots and Passing Bond should have top it a bus...a climax, that is.

This was opposite to standard Senate formats for JLA's reaction rules between and Fernando Poe Jr.'s presidential candidate Noli de Castro before presidential candidate Noli de Castro challenged Ocampo and the President to a political debate.

"Malinis sila na magsabi na mayroon kasi ang President and Ruiz debate between themselves first," Poe recently told reporters yesterday during a break in the motorcade and rally in the public plaza.

Poe, together with running mate Sen. Loren Legarda and 11 senatorial candidates of the Koalisyon ng Pagbabalikwing Pilipino, was in the province Friday on the last leg of a two-day sortie in Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela.

POLLS, A10

56.35 TO THE DOLLAR

Peso falls to all-time low; Palace in panic

By Dodo C. Dantino

THE PESO stumbled on Friday to 56.36 to the US dollar, its lowest ever in the country's history, due to strong political uncertainty ahead of the May elections and an imminent possibility of civil unrest should presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. be disqualified by the Supreme Court.

The peso's sharp fall, which surpassed the previous record low of 56.22 on Jan. 20 prompted Malacañang which immediately sought a meeting on Monday with the country's top economic managers to try to halt the decline of financial currency.

"I will call the central bank governor and the secretary of finance regarding the peso. In the past, we have been able to refute speculative movements," President Macapagal-Arroyo told reporters earlier here in Zamboanga.

Eli Wharapapal, a US-trained economist, said the central bank Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor Rafael Buenaventura and finance secretary Jaime Ongpin on Monday.

"The peso is being burdened by politics. Our economy remains stable," she added.

The peso was opened at 56.30 on Friday for an intra-day high of 56.36 and closed at a new record low of 56.35, shedding off 13 centavos from Thursday's close of 56.22.

Buenaventura, however, said the peso's fall was temporary but reiterated that the BSP was keeping its options open.

"Our main problem is that we focus too much on the election ...What's wrong with an all-time low? It's not the first when we were two weeks ago," he told reporters.

Buenaventura cautioned the falling peso to a host of factors such as political uncertainties, a shortfall in US dollar supply, low remittances from overseas Filipinos, and heavy corporate demand.

"We see to a period when remittances are seasonally low and we are not getting enough portfolio inflows," he said, adding that some corporations were scrambling for dollars to cover future requirements, forcing the peso would further depreciate.

PESO, A10

THE PESO's latest woes like continuing political uncertainty as to the question of Poe's citizenship is being blamed for the state for the peso's fall, the lowest yet in the nation's history.

HAPPIER TIMES: Pilipinas Cruz Genereux, seven, being

Missing Pinay's body found in suitcase in New Jersey

By Rita V. Rodrigo, Correspondent

NEW YORK—For 10 months the family waited, cried and hoped that she would one day turn up at her Manhattan luxury apartment and pick up the life she had abruptly left.

Last Wednesday, their biggest fear was confirmed.

The body of Maria Peter "Marites" Cruz was found in a suitcase floated under the concrete floor of a New Jersey house where a fugitive posing as a runaway suspect was held.

"I'm devastated. I'm still hoping it's not her," said Jose Navarro, Cruz's reader who first reported his niece missing after her office-mates at Barclays Capital told him she had not been seen in several days.

"This is very painful for us. We are hoping she's still alive. To know that Peter had suffered is unbearable. I cried when I got the news about her body," said Jo Cortillo, a New York-based cousin of Cruz.

Police believe Cruz died while undergoing surgery at the hands of a false cosmetic surgeon, Efrain Bonilla, 34, of Newark, New Jersey.

An autopsy confirmed that the woman were indeed those of the 35-year-old Cruz whose breast implants helped police detectives in identifying her.

Cruz, who was working as an investment analyst at Barclays Capital, was last seen at the lobby of her West 56th St. apartment building on April 15, 2003.

Police followed a tip that one of Bonilla's patients had died. They suspected that she victim could be Cruz.

Court records show Bonilla was arrested in early 2003 for performing cosmetic surgery in his home. Bonilla was free on a $5,000 bail and was continuing to work at a clinic also in Elizabethtown.

Bonilla, who faces to be sentenced in September, finally had said was believed to have been

MISSING, A17

A2
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2006

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Scattered showers and thunderstorms expected mostly along the southern boundaries. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated showers.

Second FRONTPAGE

RP warns France vs gunboat diplomacy

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday warned France against engaging in "gunboat diplomacy" in its latest Philippine-flagged vessel suspected of causing the death of five French fishermen.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the Philippines, "as the latest addition to the UN, was willing to help find the 19,000-ton Malaysia Trader, which had been blamed for sinking the crawler-hopper French off southwestern England last month.

"But let us practice clear process and not gunboat diplomacy. All investigations must be based on facts and the rules of evidence," said Bunye in a statement.

Bunye was referring to the plan of the French navy to seize the Philippine-registered freighter, whose owners have denied the charges against the vessel which collided on the waters last Jan. 31.

French authorities had said they had no evidence to put up against the Seattle Trader for the accident but the French navy has launched a dramatic chase in the high seas for the Filipino freighter.

Earlier the French Embassy in Manila said it was awaiting the cooperation of the Philippine government.

"We are in contact with the Philippine authorities. They are doing their best. We are very thankful to the Philippine authorities for the spirit of cooperation they are showing," an embassy spokesman said.

An undersecretary commander of the border supposedly had been struck by a large and powerful ship, probably a freighter.

Investigators in France have issued an international warrant to allow them to take their report to foreign ports to hunt down those responsible, who risk five years in prison if found guilty of manslaughter.

The French government may send a Model to the Philippines to investigate the alleged involvement of the freighter in the collision, diplomatic sources said on Saturday.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Antonio Basilio said officials of the French Embassy in Manila spoke with Department of Foreign Affairs officers in charge of maritime affairs on the possibility of sending a "regular commitment" to investigate the alleged collision.

The commission would be authorized to examine witnesses and interview crew members in the incident.

The department has yet to receive a formal request from the French authorities to board the Seattle Trader, the source added.

Under a 2002 United Nations convention governing shipping in international waters, no vessel can be stopped or halted unless the "flag state" — the country where it is registered — so orders.

Adviser-chief Cesar Sarino, in a telephone interview, said officials were under way to persuade Philippine authorities to make such an order.

The owner of the Seattle Trader, the Manila-based company Nelson Shipping and Management, has denied that its ship had been part of the collision and offered to have the vessel inspected at a neutral port.

The Seattle Trader, now sailing through the Red Sea, is one of six ships being investigated for responsibility in the Jan. 31 collision.

"We believe it's not that ship," company director Vicente Mendoza said. "If it is, it's up to the Philippine government to know the owner of an accident."

The freighter is headed for the Chinese port of Hongkong and Mendoza said the owners and crew would fully cooperate once the vessel has docked.

"If the French authorities want to inspect it, decide it, let us just unload the cargo first and do the proper investigation and have all the diplomatic coordination with the Philippine government," he said.

Mendoza also said that owners were willing to have the ship searched and inspected at a neutral venue, but not in the Mediterranean or Djibouti where it is scheduled to pass on Sunday.

"The port owner is not running," he said. "If they wanted to, they could escape. They drove to look at us half while it is passing through," Mendoza said.

The Canadian Coast Guard had reported the freighter after the January collision of the hulled of French authorities and found out the ship was more than 10 kilometers away from the Bugsted Bretch sites of some dozens.

The authorities reports said that the French trawler would have been hit by a North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country's submarine, which was conducting naval exercise in the area when the collision took place. — Aaliah Lubag-Javellana, Jerome Aning and AFP

RP, Italy sign pact on defense

The Philippines and Italy signed on record on defense cooperation yesterday to boost their military ties.

Defense Undersecretary Benjamin Gaos and Italian Embassy Minister Filippo Scammacca signed the agreement calling on the two countries to "encourage, facilitate and develop cooperation".

The areas covered include security and policy industry and procurement of logistics, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, compliance with international treaties, armed forces organization and equipment of military units. — AFP

JVC
CYBERCAM
SUMMER
Fusion

CAPTURE THE EXCITEMENT.

This summer, discover JVC's latest compact and feature-packed camcorders.

Enjoy the superb picture quality, wide angle shot, compactness and many more.

These camcorders also offer you the multimedia functions to create your own movies and memories.

JVC VCD CREATION CYBERCAMS

GR-DV400U
GR-DVP3
GR-DVX50U
GR-DX95U
GR-D33U
GR-D93U

CATCH THE JVC CYBERCAM MALL TOUR

VIDEO ACCESSORIES INCLUDED ON ALL MODELS

AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING APPLIANCE STORES NATIONWIDE

Distributed & Serviced by: JVC (PHILIPPINES), INC.

JVC
The Perfect Experience

Poll-related violence alarms Namfrel: 10 days, 18 dead

By Blanche S. Rivera

ONLY 10 days into the official election campaign period, at least 18 people have died from poll-related violence, raising concern for the safety of volunteer poll watchers of the National Movement for Free Elections.

The Namfrel watch has been monitoring the polls since 1984, reminder said the safety concerns were more critical in this election year than previously.

"I hope it is not more dangerous. It is dangerous enough. This is more tension, and the people are very passionate," said Namfrel secretary general Guillermo Luz in an interview at the Namfrel's national assembly at the Heritage Hotel.

The Namfrel is building a network of some 350,000 volunteers to help in the education and information campaign and serve as poll watchers for the May 10 elections.

The government has also established 320 "hot spots," or areas where there is fierce political rivalry all over the country.

Namfrel chief Jose Luis Martin has urged the government to hold a special poll for each election-related spot to ensure peace.

The task force, to be made up of a bishop, a Muslim alama, a pastor and a similar representative, would meet with rival politicians regularly.

Commission said the signing of covenants for peace during elections was no longer effective because "they shoot at each other after signing."

Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane said on the matter those official went to give a briefing for the Namfrel delegates at the assembly yesterday.

Luz said at least 12 Namfrel volunteers were killed during the 2004 elections in 1986. The group has not suffered any casualty in subsequent elections.

"We are bracing for possible incidents. The results would be a factor in the unlikely other elections, so the people have to make a very informed decision," Luz said.

FAO award elates GMA

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MS ELATED President Macapagal-Arroyo, receiving a medal from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization yesterday, congratulated the award to the federal, she claims, were the most important winners.

And she hugged-of-fan-jealousy-laundry hung up audiences to be allowed to deliver her acceptance speech gaudy in Filipino so she could address the Filipino nation at large.

The FAO gave Ms Macapagal the Grow award, conferred on women who played critical roles in agricultural programs for attaining food security.

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf presented the medal to the President at Malacañang yesterday.

Ms Macapagal was cited for her program of modernizing agriculture to attain food security, social equity and greater job opportunities for Filipinos.

The Palace said Ms Macapagal was the first Filipino woman to receive the award named after the Women political who fought tirelessly for to plow the land, plant and harvest food.

"I accept this honor which is the women's equivalent of the Nobel Prize or the Gran Awards for food and agriculture," she said in an overflowing of the FAO's efforts to help end hunger in the world.

"I accept it with great pride as well as with deep humility. I am humbled as well as by the company of the first luminaries who received this award. The late Mother Theresa; Queen Sirikit of Thailand; Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand; Prime Minister Shaikh Hasina of Bangladesh; and Prime Minister Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of Sri Lanka, to name just a few," she said.

Diouf noted how Ms Macapagal had during her administration "put goals for a liberalized economy, a modernized agriculture and a free market economy, and economic growth to raise the disadvantaged groups."

"You somewhere accomplishments in the areas of poverty alleviation, protection of the environment and natural resources, economic growth and development of the infrastructure are brilliant milestones of your administration and success," Diouf was quoted as saying in a Palace statement.

He said that FAO was "proud to award" Ms Macapagal in her agrarian reform programs which is now the UN food agency's largest technical assistance program in the country.

The President said she was accepting the award on behalf of farmers and government workers who help bring food to every Filipino table.

That is why, said foreign dignitaries in the audience, she said she was asking permission from Diouf to deliver most of her speech in Filipino.

Her speech reminded like her campaign spiels, in which she described her achievements as President which she said were but done anyone for more progress that she would deliver if elected for a full term.

The Macapagal said that in the country's latest, it was only her administration which is spending P60 billion for agricultural modernization.

Military, police officers support Lacson, says ex-PNP chief

By Norman Bordadora

LUCENA CITY—Former senate standard bearer Panfilo Lacson, his campaign officials and supporters have a number of retired and active officers and enlisted men from the military and the police supporting his presidential bid and are actively campaigning within the armed services for the opposition senator.

Retired Philippine National Police chief Reynaldo Santiaguo disclosed that many retired officers from both the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police would serve as campaign leaders and poll watchers for Lacson, a former PNP chief.

"There are retired officers from the Armed Forces and the PNP who support because Lacson. There are active officers as well," Santiaguo said.

These include, he said, retired general Hitech Tangke and former AFP chief of staff Angelo Reyes.

"We are trying to approach those still in the active service to get them to support Senator Lacson. We will use the ballot for retirees, no guns, no violence, free exercise of true," he added.

But Santiaguo declined to name the active officers supporting Lacson, although Chief Supt. Prudencio Zulita is known as a prominent figure in the senator's campaign within the PNP.

Lacson himself believes he has the support of many retired and active military and police officers and personnel.

"They are but not published," Lacson said.

"The retired officers have said that they will help in ensuring vote security. They would work to guard our votes," Lacson said.

Santiaguo himself leads the Pag Ibig Foundation. Members in Quezon Province despite being closely identified with former President Fidel Ramos who appointed him PNP chief in 1994. Ramos, chairman emeritus of Lakas-CMD, is an avid supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Santiaguo, a classmate in the Philippine Military Academy batchmate Gen. Ito of another Macapagal supporter, former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, backed Lacson's push at his home-town in this city.

Lacson's lone senatorial candidate Nacionalista Rep. Carlos Padilla, campaign leaders Makati Rep. Agapito Aquino and Iloilo Rep. Roberto Ingeniero and the rest of his campaign staff toured in Batangas. Quezon last week after the first day of Senate Queson Province hearings.

"I support Senator Lacson because I believe in his platform of discipline in governance. I believe he can inspire the Filipino nation," Santiaguo said.

Among the campaign leaders in Quezon Province, and Santiaguo, are retired Gen. Ben Villegas, Dr. Cut Garag and Panagdilao Aquino, retired Maj. Ric Deguna.

Bro. Eddie seeks HK-style anti-graft body

FOUNDERS' Eddie Villanueva has vowed to form an independent anti-corruption commission patterned after Hong Kong's no-nonsense Independent Commission Against Corruption, if elected President.

"The ICAC has absolute power against corruption as it is feared by politicians," said Bro. Eddie in remarks at the Rizal Day Congress at the Folk Arts Theater on Thursday.

The ICAC has earned a reputation for being one of the most effective anti-corruption agencies in Asia.

Villanueva, who heads the Jesus is Lord Movement Christian-based sect, is running for President under the Bangon Pilipinas party.

Bro. Eddie said that if elected, he would form a body patterned after the ICAC which works with other government agencies and non-government organizations to implement Hong Kong's anti-corruption laws.

He cited numerous anomalous investments of corporations in government that were questionable. Some of the cases involved Cabinet members and other high-ranking officials, he said in a statement.

He said he would appoint to his anti-corruption body people who have the integrity to "destroy the appearance of corruption."

"There are many Filipinos with integrity and who really love their country. We will definitely get the right people there. They will not be bribable or any politicians or businessmen. The panel will be independent of all government officials, even the Office of the President," he said in a statement.

Villanueva has enabled Malacañang's Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) for its failure to root out corruption.

He said the PAGC has failed to check official misconduct and thoroughly investigate cases involving various government officials because it is under the influence of Malacañang.

Villanueva's beef with the PAGC yesterday found an ally in a rival presidential candidate, Raul Roco.

Roco assailed the PAGC's handling of the case against former justice secretary Teresita de Leon after was cleared by Malacañang of any "appearance of graft" amidst a PAGC recommendation that she be charged.

The PAGC found Perez guilty for issuing a recommendation barring immigration authorities from deporting, without his approval, the arrest records of the President, Vice President, Cabinet members and legislators.

Roco said the PAGC was "broken," noting that it had investigated him for alleged graft in late 2002, but up to now has not issued a resolution on the case.

"It's a horrible commission. They investigate, but I don't know if there's any resolution because they don't give a copy. It's a kangaroo commission," Roco told reporters in an ambush interview in Tarlac yesterday.

Roco quit as education secretary in August 2002 after President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered him investigated for graft allegedly committed by officials of the education department under his watch.

Kenneth V goes under the knife today

By Carly Rubio Cubcubin

ORTIGAS, Manila's prayers

Kenneth Villa, the 8-year-old boy afflicted with a rare neurocardiocutaneous disorder called Moyamoya syndrome, will finally get his much-awaited surgery today at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila.

Kenneth's story first appeared in the Inquirer on Oct. 13, 2003, a day before his 8th birthday. The young boy had been abandoned by both his parents and was being attended to by maternal aunts. He has been bedridden for the last four years with no medical attention after an unsuccessful surgery to correct the instability in the C1 section of his spine was performed in 1999.

Financial aid for Kenneth's surgery so poor in after that first story. The article also caught the attention of Philippine Airlines Executive Director Carmen Rodriguez who brought Ken's medical records to neurosurgeon Dr. Willy Lopez.

Lopez agreed to perform the surgery on Kenneth with the objective of correcting the instability in the cranio-vertebral junction. However, before any surgery could be performed, a scan was needed to precisely locate a pediatric lab that would relieve the accumulation of the blood to prevent further injury.

After a second story was released in November, more financial aid, books and toys were sent by many generous souls who were moved by Kenneth's plight and inspired by his unshakable spirit and unshakeable faith.

On New Year's Day, Kenneth had a bout of pneumonia but survived.

Last Monday, after an hour-long procedure under local anesthesia, the test was placed on Kenneth's head by Dr. Lopez and neurosurgeon Dr. Adrian Carbajosa at PGH. For the first time, Kenneth is finally able to relieve his head and has a whole new view of the world which he had been deprived of for many years.

Last Wednesday, his doctors, who are all giving their services for free, gathered together for an interdisciplinary conference to discuss Kenneth's case. Other members of the team, embedded by the country's best, are pediatric cardiologist Edgardo Delos Angeles, who is chair of the Department of Pediatrics in PGH; pediatric pulmonologist Alice Javier; pediatric neurologist Estrella Campos; anesthesiologist Lorna Feliciano; neuroradiologist Ferdinand Inocencio; and anesthesiologist Marissa Lubiano.

The surgery today is expected to last approximately six to seven hours. It is admittedly a difficult one and its success can only be determined later on the next few months. Kenneth can be released all the ventilator and become more mobile. There he has to wait for the bones to take place. Only then can the bolts and be removed.

Kenneth, however, remains undaunted and in high spirits. He has played his full hand and could do more to the doctors who care for him and to the Divine Healer it was a heroic hardened strength.

If you want to help in Kenneth's recovery fund, please call Heidilyn Villa at 0915.6888.134 or 687-7406. Letters of support for him or his mentors may also be sent to the PGH.

KENNETH V Villa puts on a happy face for doctors and visitors at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila.

NewsBriefs

Sex rap filed vs Yank for abuse of RP boys

A US citizen has been charged with multiple sex abuse of minors against boys from the Philippines and Cambodia and was scheduled to appear before a US federal court on Thursday, authorities said.

Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge and Federal Bureau Attorney for the District of Maryland Thomas DiBiagio announced the unsealing of a 40-count indictment charging Richard Arthur Schmidt, 57, with "multiple offenses involving the sexual molestation of teen-age boys in the Philippines and Cambodia," a publicly-authorized statement said.

Schmidt was to appear in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, just outside Washington at 10:00 GMT, said prosecutor US attorney Victor Lindsay.

Schmidt "refers to as parole in the State of Maryland, has been convicted in Maryland state court of crimes relating to the sexual molestation of minor teenage boys in the Philippines and Cambodia," the statement added.

AFP

Pro supporters mull Ayala protest

SUPPORTERS of homicide Hue Jr. from the middle class yesterday vowed to stage a mass protest action possibly along Ayala Avenue in Makati City to pressure the Supreme Court into junking the disqualification case against him.

The Ayala rally is set the day before the high court is scheduled to release its ruling on the case questioning Poe's citizenship, said Ateneo Law professor Ed Pangalangan, spokesman for Kilusan ng Pagbabago sa Pilipinas (KBP).

Pangalangan said groups under the "Pro-Democracy Coalition," an alliance of lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and other professionals, decided to move the mass action from the Supreme Court on Edsa to Ayala to give people in the area more chances to express its views.

"They say the Supreme Court is still finding ways to [delay] the case," Ayala. "We don't like that."

Christine O. Espinosa

Broadcaster vs broadcasters

Broadcaster Ely Saez yesterday unleashed scathing criticisms against fellow broadcasters and leading vice presidential candidates Senators Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda.

Saez, who is suing a Senate post under the Arroyo administration, took potshots at the two former ABS-CBN newscasters, saying they were unfit to assume the vice presidency because their experience lacked veracity of reading scripts for TV news.

"Sir [De Castro's name] knew anything except to read a note. The same with Loren Legarda," Saez said at a debate forum at the Tarlac State University, where the mystery note dropped by other a hour at a market in Tarlac and a motorcade to the Tarlac City.

"They are my former colleagues and believe you me, they're not qualified to be the vice president of this country."

Saez, host of a radio show and the "Mel & Jay" talk show on DWIZ-1, recalled that De Castro and Legarda worked under him while he was executive vice president and later news director of ABS-CBN from 1986 to 1998.

D. Benjamin

Asian eyes more cyber reefs to save money

To save money and time, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is considering to reduce its ministerial summits and hold its consultations more in cyberspace.

This proposal was aired by the Cambodian government during a meeting in Phnom Penh the other day between visiting Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albar and other Asian ambassadors.

Cambodia wants the number of Asean summit or ministerial and high-level meetings drastically cut down. It also wants some ongoing projects scrapped, like the Asean Regional Forum.

"I think that this proposal should be really considered, given the need to rationalize and streamline the numerous Asean meetings held every year which are costly in the meantime," Albar said.

She said the current practice of using the facilities of the Internet and e-mail by leaders in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation could likewise be looked into by the Asean.

Jaime Laya

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

It's us or you go it alone–PBA

ENCARNADO: Where you have a team, it should not be done piecemeal

By Jane Navarro

ALL OR nothing.

Unless the Basketball Association of the Philippines accepts this condition, the Philippine Basketball Association will no longer have anything to do with the formation, training and fielding of the Philippine team to the Asian Games.

"When you form a team, it should not be piecemeal. You form it not by just getting the best players available, but also having a coach you are confident with and a staff that complements the entire organization," PBA chair Hadji Emeramado told the Inquirer yesterday.

"Unless you show there's a better basketball organization than the PBA in the country, I will be glad to yield our position," said Emeramado, the Letre Perdyl's representative to the PBA Board of Governors, who took over as chair from Jose Caballero of Barangay Ginebra this season.

Emeramado pointed out that getting the right team chemistry is difficult if the PBA stars work under coaches outside of the pro league.

"The players, coaches, team officials and the rest of the staff coming from the PBA should make up the team. Otherwise, it will simply be a team of talents," Emeramado said.

Responding to the chairman of time, the PBA took over the responsibility of fielding the national quintet to the Asian Games starting in 1998 after forging a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the SMP.

The first PBA All-Star team to the Asiad, coached by Robert Jaworski, finished an unclaimed second behind China.

The 1994 squad handled by Norman Black landed fourth. This time's Centennial team, second up third in 1998 while Joey Lorbes's 2002 squad almost made it to the gold medal game before losing to South Korea and eventually finishing No. 4 again.

Pushed against the wall, secretary general Graham Lim said the BAP is willing to sit down with the PBA to open a bid on the controversy. But he stressed that the Asian Games is still two years away and there's no need to make things.

"It's better if we could talk about it. But it's too early because right now we are focusing on our basketball program. I know there will come a time that we will need them and I will not think twice of asking them help," said Lim.

The SMP had earlier formed a long-term partnership with Urbanus Unofficer, which agreed to finance all the expenses of the national team.

ISEDEÑO celebrates after sinking his putt on the last hole to win by eight shots.

Isedeño, Negros pals rule Uratex caddies tilt

JOSE Isedeño and his Negros Occidental team completed a sweep of the major awards in the annual Uratex National Caddies Championship yesterday at the Valley Golf and Country Club's Executive course in Antipolo.

Showing up his younger clerks, the 47-year-old Isedeño capped a second-breaking eight-shot victory in the individual category with an eagle-spiked four-under par 68, 16 pars home to be ended with at least P75,000 plus a television set and the Roberto Go Cheng Cup.

Isedeño's brilliant form rubbed off on his Negros teammates as they outdueled host Valley by four strokes in the team competition.

Julius Esposito carded a 76 and oldest of the 71s of Rodlyn Mendez Jr. and Robert Malaga counted as Negros' 209 for the day and a 72-hole total of 840 in the four-to-play, three-to-count format. The Negrenses succeeded Mark Wach, winner the past two years, as champions.

Gaddang's Ivorne Cumis had her share of glory on a day of comebacks, winning a five-shot duel in a playoff over co-clubber Susan Delfino of Kagayanon by beating the latter on the first extra hole.

Cumis shot a 79 for 296 against Ms. 289 of Delfino who limped home with an 87. Nilda Borja of Southwoods took third place with an 86-301.

As champions of the annual event the last fourteen years, Ruben Cheng launched in 1988, the Negros team shared the P75,000 top prize while Cumis took home P20,000.

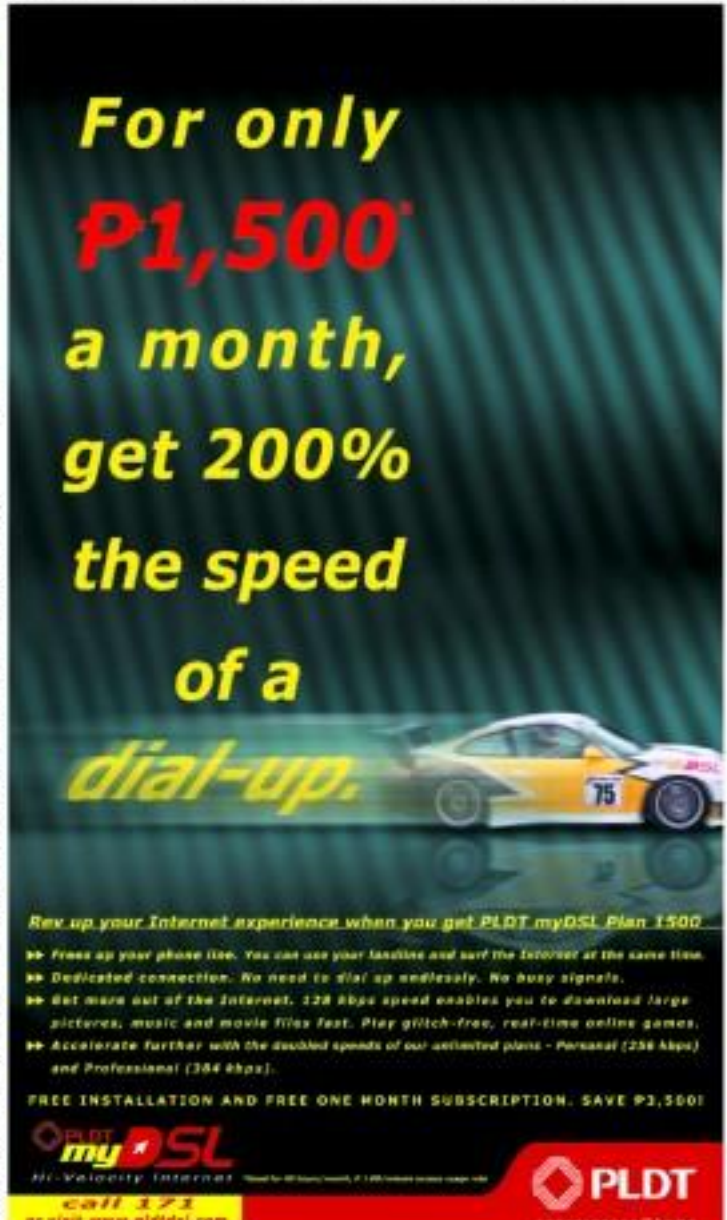
Their winnings, however, were less than the P426,000 earned by Rodrick Borja of Japan Air United for scoring a hole-in-one at the 11th.

Isedeño, who had earlier outside of 71-67 and 66, highlighted his evening round by reaching the par 5 ninth hole in two and getting his eagle from 14-feet.

Asked what he would do with his biggest paycheck since joining the circuit in 1992, Isedeño said he'll use it for the education of his two daughters.

Wach's furst blitzer made a 73 to finish second behind Isedeño with 301. Oliver Solano of Apo matched Isedeño's 66 and Junior Pepito of Acer Valley carded a 69 to tie for third at 304.

Valley here is led for the team title after a 224 and an 886 total. Apo shot 228 to finish third with 907, followed by Iloilo 909 and Bacolod 975. Wach Pilak, the defending champion, failed with 1076 to take sixth place in 9th.



5 suspected rebels arrested over Masbate ambush

San Cristobal Garden Homes
Calamba, Laguna
Initial Down Payment
P5,000
Accepted at
OMNI ASIA
Property Ventures
WELCOME
Agents/Brokers

MADISON MANOR
STUDIO/OFFICE/COMMERCIAL UNITS AVAILABLE
CHE ABELLAR REALTY
JZ REALTY 671-8210 | 0927-2205209
MAYET 531-7050 | 0915-8074716

Is your English good enough? How can you prove it?
IELTS.
go further
IELTS

LOURDES SCHOOL OF MANDALUTONG
Shaw Blvd., Greenhills, Mandaluyong City
ANNOUNCES THE OPENING FOR SY 2004-2005
KINDERGARTEN, PREPARATORY, GRADES 1 to 7,
FIRST - THIRD YEAR HIGH SCHOOL
ENROLLEES BEFORE MARCH 15 WOULD BE TREATED FAVORABLY.
ALL CLASSROOMS ARE FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED

By Cherissa V. Siganse

[illegible] suspected communist rebels were arrested on Wednesday in connection with the ambush that killed nine policemen and injured four others in Masbate town, Masbate, earlier this week.

Policemen, backed by soldiers from the 5th Scout Ranger Company, arrested Arthur Rotoro, 44, Luciano Aguero, 52, Ariel Aguero, 24, Rhilmark Tanoamo, 21, and Aladin Segovia, 32, in Sitio Cutcog, Barangay Dapdap.

Witnesses reportedly identified the suspects as members of a New People's Army unit that set up the fatal road roadblock.

The various members of the 12-man of the Ninth Provincial Police Mobile Group were on their way to a nearby town to check on the reported killing of a barangay chair when they were attacked by armed [illegible] rebels.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, later admitted that the ambush could have been staged by the 5,000-Bonifacio Inihawa Command.

The ambush drew sharp criticism from the Macapagal administration as it came shortly after formal peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front in Oslo, Norway.

However, chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III said the incident should not affect strengthen the resolve of both panels to pursue the peace talks and finally end 35 years of Marxist insurgency in the country.

In Camp Aguinaldo, the military warned yesterday that communist rebels are planning to attack police and military detachments and other civilian installations in Pasay province and Metro Manila.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) National Capital Region Command said it discovered the NPA plot from documents that the soldiers recovered after a firefight with rebels in Barangay Gen. Luna in Quezon.

"The attack would include ambushes and harassment of police and military detachments," said Maj. Leonel Rosario, Liaison, spokesperson of the NCR Command.

The NCR Command was established in October last year and covers the cities and municipalities in the National Capital Region, or twenty-one in all. In the Week previous, two rebels in Cavite and another were in Laguna. With reports from Alexis Romero

Check in early, PAL advises passengers

PHILIPPINE Airlines has advised passengers on its international flights to check in at least three and a half hours before scheduled departure from Manila and Cebu.

Passengers taking PAL domestic flights at Manila and Cebu were advised to check in at least two and a half hours prior to scheduled departure.

The adjusted check-in hour is necessary to ease passenger inconvenience on account of checks and lengthier security checks at both airports, PAL said.

It will also relieve the expected congestion at the airports with the onset of the peak summer travel period next month.

PAL's check-in counters at Ninoy Aquino International Terminal 2 in Manila are open to serve passengers starting 2:30 a.m. for domestic flights and 4 a.m. for international flights, daily.

For more information, visit www.philippineair.com.

Zeta Phi Sigma to mark 39th foundation day

THE ZETA Phi Sigma Fraternity will celebrate its 39th foundation day with a dinner induction of members on Feb. 29, 5:30 p.m., Sunday at the Tejeros High Commissioned Officers Country Club, Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The celebration will continue on March 1 at Kanlaon Rive, Quezon City Memorial Circle.

For details, call Mrk Miguel at 671-4789 / 433-2335, Jaculdet 0916-454-7778 or Jerz Cordero at 929-2119.

DERACK downs one hoop/Kevin Vienton/Reuters

Vladimir Radmanovic during their NBA game Thursday. Radmanovic led the Nets with 26 points in the 113-104 win over the Knicks.

WEST LEADERS

Wolves devour Kings

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota—Kevin Garnett collected 22 points and 24 rebounds as the Minnesota Timberwolves welcomed back Wally Szczerbiak and beat Sacramento, 92-75, Thursday, to move into a Vivendi tie for the best record in the National Basketball Association.

Last year's Most Valuable Player in recent cup to Tim Duncan and spent missing the leading candidates, Garnett poured his 16th straight double-double and sixth 25-20 game of the season.

The Mids rebounding leader gave Minnesota an overwhelming 63-34 advantage on the glass.

"I just wanted to come out aggressive," Garnett said. "When you're in the flow, it can be a defensive flow, an offensive flow, or it can be a rebounding flow. I was in a flow that I was extremely enthused and valiant it was going, and just wanted it and went and got it." Garnett's presence in the paint also rattled the Kings, who had the NBA in scoring and shooting. They missed a half-dozen layups and all eight 3-pointers in the first half, falling into a 43-34 hole.

Szczerbiak, a sweet-shooting swingman, joined the first 10 games of the season and scored a seasoned planner fashion numbers in his left hand. He came off the bench in the second quarter and had a pair of buckets.

Szczerbiak also had a layup with 7:31 left that gave Minnesota a 74-66 lead and began a decisive 11-2 run. Amid chants of "MVP," Garnett topped the surge by finding Sam Cassell for a 3-pointer, making a short bank shot and sinking two free throws for an 81-70 lead with 4:18 to go.

Cassell scored 18 points for the Timberwolves (29-11), who moved within percentage points of the Kings (30-10) for the league's best record and home-court advantage throughout the playoffs.

All-Star Peja Stojakovic scored 31 points for the Kings, who shot terrific 54 percent (30-of-66) and were fueled in their fastest streak of the season. They had a four-game winning streak stopped. AFP

Complete results:

Minnesota 92, Sacramento 75; Philadelphia 110, Seattle 101; LA Clippers 106, Boston 100

GARNETT

Sprain sidelines Carter

TORONTO—Toronto Raptors star Vince Carter will be sidelined up to a month after suffering a sprained left ankle, officials of the National Basketball Association team said here Thursday.

Carter scored 22 points in 36 minutes before injuring NBA champion San Antonio but left the game with the injury with 7:44 remaining in the fourth quarter. The Spurs rallied to beat the Raptors, 86-82.

Carter joins Chris Bosh and Jalen Rose on the sidelined list for the Raptors, who are 25-20 and seventh in the Eastern Conference. Rose games ahead of Boston and Miami. AFP

Artest out after surgery

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana—Indiana Pacers All-Star forward Ron Artest has a torn left thumb ligament and will be sidelined indefinitely after surgery, the National Basketball Association club announced here Thursday. Artest, 24, averages 16.6 points and 5.3 rebounds this season for the Pacers, whose 39-21 record is the best in the East. AFP

2ND IN 10 DAYS

Wallace traded to Pistons

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Rasheed Wallace was traded for the second time in 10 days, this time joining Detroit as the centerpiece of a three-team deal at the National Basketball Association trading deadline.

Wallace, whose left of emotional outbursts led to numerous technical fouls, was sent last week from Portland to Atlanta, where he played one game before being sent to the Pistons, a top Eastern Conference contender.

Wallace, making $17 million this season in the last year of a six-season deal worth $80 million dollars, will join Detroit along with Boston guard Mike James. Pistons basketball operations president Joe Dumars said.

Detroit sent guards Chucky Atkins and Lindsey Hunter to Boston while Atkins will receive Pistons guard Bobby Sura and Serbian center Dejkov Schwarz plus Boston forward Chris Mills.

The Celtics will also receive Detroit's first-round selection in this year's NBA Draft and money while Atlanta receives a 2004 first-round draft pick that originated in Milwaukee has has gone through four different NBA clubs.

But one of the deadline day's big movers was the final line of Wallace, 31, who joins standout rebounder Ben Wallace on the Pistons' frontline. AFP

WALLACE

Dream Team faces toughest training ever

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado—Trying to avoid having the "Dream Team" face in some nights, the United States Olympic squad of basketball hopefuls continue over will face its toughest pre-Games training ever.

Six pre-Olympic exhibition games will feature stops in Germany, Turkey and Serbia and Montenegro on the road to pre-Olympic tournament announced here Thursday.

US pre-Olympic workouts start July 26 at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville and continue through a July 31 exhibition game against Olympic Round Puerto Rico.

NBA stars will then fly to Cologne, Germany, for a three-game round robin tournament featuring Germany and Italy take place August 1. The US team plays Italy on August 3 and Germany the following night.

The Americans then travel to Belgrade for a matchup against reigning world champions Serbia and Montenegro on August 8 at the new Belgrade Arena salted. ubcity to be completed in July.

The NBA road show swings to Athens for the start of the Team Olympic plans, including exhibitions August 13 against Turkey and August 15 against an opponent to be determined.

The Athens Olympics begin August 13 with men's basketball opening just two days later and running through August 28, the penultimate day of the Games.

BRYANT

There three defending champion United States was tested by Lithuania, the only team to beat the 2000 Sydney Olympics before entering and the number of international NBA players have risen sharply in the past four years.

A loaded NBA lineup was a wildcard at the 2002 World Championships in Indianapolis but the star's squad will feature the best available NBA talent.

In preliminary round play the US men will be paired with Angola, Australia, Greece, Lithuania and Puerto Rico in Group B while Group A includes Argentina, China, Italy, New Zealand, Spain and Serbia and Montenegro.

All-each named to the US roster are Kobe Bryant, Jason Kidd, Karl Malone, Tim Duncan, Yao Ming, Grady Allen Iverson, Mike Bibby, Ray Allen and Jermaine O'Neal with three spots vacant.

Three Carter and Shaquille O'Neal are among the candidates to complete the US lineup, which will be coached by Detroit coach Larry Brown. AFP

0% Interest on Video Cams, LCD and Plasma TVs

What if you can now own a high-tech home entertainment worth P17,000 tomorrow? Or how all your High Video camcorder or Sharp video digital cam at 0% interest for 10 months?

Wonder no more, because now we get all these digital toys and more at 0% interest when you shop tomorrow. Canon's "Digital Video Days" at the Glorietta 4, Ayala Center in Cebu and Ayala Center Cebu are the only two malls in the Philippines that you're looking for in the metro.

Experience the most high-tech video cams, digital still cameras, LCD monitors, plasma TVs and projection TVs and the many accessories to complement the purchase of TV recorded, as well as DVD players, all with 0% interest. Canon, Panasonic, Sharp, Sony and Toshiba have offered as 0% interest plus a free projector or TV when available.

And here's the ultimate offer at the video fest that you won't watch at 0% interest TV for only P100,000 that's available at affordable rates interest for 10 months!

What are you waiting for? The perfect production gifts are here! Visit the "Digital Video Days" participated 15 and get the best deals on all these amazing video products. A change-it-rates apply accepted.

Last Few Days To Enjoy Tuesday Clearance Close-Out

Extended until February 29, 2004 at the Level 3 Video Block of the Trinoma Center in Manila, the same applies at the two areas to buy all the latest appliances and furniture at really low prices at the Tuesday Clearance Close-Out Sale!

Also until these are to Tuesday Center and Sogo's Tuesday Clearance Close-Out Sale are a lot of the best appliances and furniture at the low down!

Last 2 days!

GRANDEST BIGGEST DVD SALE EVER!

The widest selection of all-original DVD titles at rock-bottom prices

Exclusively at

BLITZKRIEG

The PODIUM 4th Level

February 13 to 22 only!

... more today than yesterday ...

the Starecase concert series

Feb. 13, 2004 NR Tent

Feb. 14, 2004 Hard Rock Cafe

Feb 20, 2004 8pm at the Greenhills 3 Park

Feb 21, 2004 4:30pm at the Alabang Town Center Activity Center

Emirates

Inquirer

SHARP

The WORLD

Cita Lorena G. Gueco

JUMPING BETWEEN SPECIES

2 Thai domestic cats die of bird flu

BANGKOK—Two domestic cats in Thailand died of the same bird flu that has killed 23 people in Asia, scientists said on Friday, inconclusive tests that the virus can move between species as easily as it has between countries.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra urged pet lovers in Thailand, linked birdplague of the period, champagne-colored Siamese cat, to stay calm but said they should think twice before feeding stray cat domestic animals with potentially infected meat.

"Please don't panic," Thaksin told reporters in the capital, Bangkok. "If animals eat raw, infected chicken, they will have no immunity. Please do not feed your pets uncooked chicken."

With the human death toll from the virulent H5N1 bird flu virus standing at 22 in Vietnam and Thailand, scientists has restricted in the number of different species it is able to infect.

At present, H5N1 appears to spread mainly only among birds, but health experts fear it might soon seek another animal or human the virus to produce a highly contagious and deadly variant that would unleash a global human flu pandemic.

The two dead cats, which were among three of 15 cats tested from a house near an infected chicken farm in Suburn Suburn, fell late year of Bangkok, are the first cases of the virus to be found in domestic animals.

"We found H5N1 in two of the three cats," said Boonjeid Sirisanamit, a veterinarian at Kasetsart University's animal hospital who conducted the autopsies.

"They might have caught the virus from eating chicken carcasses or from the chicken that had died flu," he said.

Besides killing humans and millions of wild and farmed birds across Asia, the H5N1 strain showed this week it can jump to other species after a rare cloud of leopard at a zoo near Bangkok was confirmed as having died of bird flu.

Reports this month that the virus had spread to pigs, which have an immune system similar to humans', renewed fear in Asia.

"Clearly the more animal species that are infected with the avian flu virus, the bigger is the risk to humans they may catch the virus from animals," Hans Wolgand, the World Health Organization's Thailand representative, said.

"We need to be very, very sensitized."

As novel spread, the health ministry said it had sent officials to check on anybody who had been in contact with the dead cats, while pet owners took immediate precautions, sterilizing meals from cooked chicken related.

"Fresh has become my cats' daily meal these days," said Parunpa Siddaseem, a 34-year-old nurse who spends 3000 a month on food for her seven cats and the 100 stray dogs in her Bangkok neighborhood. Reuters

A Thai vet checks a sick cat at the Animal Hospital in Bangkok, Feb. 20. The deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu has been detected in a leopard, a tiger and now domestic cats in Thailand in the first confirmed cases of the disease in the cat family researchers said.

Bird flu detected on Canada farm

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Bird flu has been discovered on a chicken farm in British Columbia, but officials on Thursday quickly dismissed fears that the disease could spread to humans.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency was still conducting laboratory tests on the disease, but officials said it had been identified at the 10th strain of avian influenza, the same type of strain found recently in Delaware.

Gillen Today, a DNA veterinarian and virologist, said it appeared the disease spread to the broiler chicken farm from wild birds, "which is a normal, frequent occurrence for this disease." "There is no link with transmission from the United States," Drake said.

According to the CFIA's Web site, the 17 avian has not been linked to illnesses in humans, and is not the same strain at the center of an outbreak in Asia that has been linked to the deaths of 22 people in Vietnam and Thailand.

"Historically, H7 has never been involved in serious human disease," said Drake. "It's not infectious to humans."

The agencies are waiting to confirm if disease is a low or highly pathogenic version of the virus, but officials said it appeared it is of the low pathogenic version.

The farm near Abbotsford in southwestern British Columbia has been quarantined to keep the disease from spreading, and about 16,000 birds will be "depopulated" within five next few days," officials said. Reuters

Iran hardliners set to win polls, end reform era

TEHRAN—Iranians began voting in a disputed parliamentary election on Friday overshadowed by a ban on most reformist candidates and a crackdown on pro-reform media.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, among the first to vote, said the Islamic Republic's enemies were trying to deter young people from voting—an apparent reference to a boycott by banned reformist lawmakers and student groups.

"Those are those those who are against the Islamic nature and the revolution are trying very hard to prevent people from going to the polls," Khamenei told state television.

"I do not think those enthusiastic young people will be prevented from fulfilling their duty."

Some 46 million Iranians aged 15 and over were entitled to vote for 289 deputies, the interior ministry said. The 2500-seat, for the earthquake-stricken ancient city of Bam in southeastern Iran, will be contested later.

Islamic conservatives were certain to dominate the new assembly after a watchdog panel of unelected clerics disqualified 2,500 mainly reformist candidates and another 1,179 current members. That leaves 4,946 candidates.

State media, controlled by the conservatives, pulled out all the stops to boost the turnout, broadcasting patriotic songs and images of many-serving in pop-elections, to begin. A poll that pro-reform President Mohammad Khatami has branded "unfair."

The election could put an end to the president's efforts, repeatedly obstructed by unelected hardliner clerics, to reform and liberalize the western Islamic Republic.

Disenchantment with his failure to achieve more during seven years in office means many voters are likely simply to stay home, handing victory to his conservative opponents.

"I won't be voting and everyone I talk to says the same," said Mohsen, 44, a retired military engineer from east south Tehran. "They (politicians) just talk but they haven't done anything for the people. They only think about themselves." Reuters

Haiti rebels declare 'independent country'

GONAIVES, Haiti—An armed gang and former soldiers who seized control of a Haitian city declared themselves an independent country on Thursday and named a government-in-exile as president as a US-led delegation prepared to intervene in the conflict.

Up to 20,000 people marched in the hazy heat of the western city of Gonaives, an hour-plus roadtrip, as a former supposed rebel establishment like Prime Minister Yvonne Neptune Jeanble, Barry Mompoy, arrived for a rally. He popped in like a boxing champion with his arms in the air.

Wearing a white suit and gold glasses, he told the cheering, waving crowd decluttering, "Where we are weak, together we are strong, together we are the resistance." The rebels declared there, across the independent country of to-be-made the name of the fast-growing region around Gonaives.

They turned a government with Mompoy, who drove police out of Gonaives this month, as president.

In Washington, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said for the first time that the United States was open to the possibility of Aristide stepping aside in a way to resolving rising-turning political impasse that erupted in full-blown armed revolt on Feb. 5.

The United States later agreed to lead a delegation including French and Canadian envoys to Haiti on Saturday to push Aristide to fulfill pledges he made this month to the opposition and moderates designed to end the impasse.

They included setting up a broad-based advisory council to the government, appointing a new prime minister and disarming gangs aligned with political parties.

Powell said Aristide's deputies who met early and secondary team of three to four people from US Southern Command in the next two days to assess security in the American Embassy in Haiti.

Aristide, a democratic former parish priest, who left Haiti into democracy after decades of dictatorships overthrown or ousting of ex-Haiti violence and corruption, made a clear he had no intention of going.

"There is no doubt that I would, be willing to do if that is what it takes to defend the country," Aristide told hundreds of police officers at a ceremony for more than a dozen dead police in the National Palace in the capital, Port-au-Prince.

Up to 50 people have died in the revolt.

Aristide told the police that with "peaceful force, moral force, civic force, constitutional force and democratic force," they would defeat the rebels.

The rebels have vowed to take their ouster, but many doubt they have the firepower despite outgunning the country's 5,000 police in the towns they have taken.

In Gonaives, Mompoy's men disarmed police on Feb. 5 after hundreds of students staged by the killing of the gang's original leader, Mompoy's brother Amiot.

Guy Philippe, a former police chief of Haiti's second largest city Cap-Haitien, whom Powell met yesterday in Jamaica, is now, become chief of the armed forces. Reuters

A FORMER commander of Haitian police and new rebel military chief Guy Philip (center) takes part in a search late (to the (C) of Gonaives, Haiti, Feb. 19, which was taken over by an armed gang opposed to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Around 50 people have been killed in the armed revolt in the poorest country in the Americas, where incomes average a dollar a day. REUTERS

Woman who leaked US spy plans will not be charged

LONDON—A British intelligence official accused of leaking US plans to spy on UN Security Council delegations in the run-up to the Iraq war is unlikely to have legal proceedings against her dropped, a report said Friday.

The charges against Katharine Gun, 29, will not be pursued as no secret or personal embarrassment to the British government, The Guardian newspaper said, citing unnamed sources familiar with the case.

Gun was due to have appeared Monday at the Old Bailey criminal court in London to enter her plea on charges of disclosing intelligence information without authorization, but the hearing was postponed until next week.

She was sacked from the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Britain's electronic intelligence monitoring station, in June, two months after the Observer newspaper exposed a memo from US intelligence asking for GCHQ's help in spying on six UN Security Council members.

The six—Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Bulgaria, Guinea and Pakistan—said withheld crucial votes on UN resolutions intended to green light the US and British invasion of Iraq that took place in March.

According to The Guardian, Gun has said she will plead not guilty to leaking secrets because her actions were justified in trying to prevent the deaths of British and Iraqi troops in an "illegal war."

As part of her defense, she would seek disclosure of confidential information on the legality of the war issued to the British government just before the conflict by its top legal adviser, Attorney General Peter Goldsmith.

Prime Minister Tony Blair and other ministers have always insisted Goldsmith backed the war's legality, but his reasoning has never been released.

According to the newspaper, the government would insist Blair be able to release the advice, allowing Gun's lawyers to argue their client could therefore not get a fair trial.

The long delay in bringing Gun to trial indicated that there had been dramatic behind-the-scenes developments, the Guardian added. AFP

S. Francisco sues California over gay wedding ban

SAN FRANCISCO—Defiant San Francisco went on the offensive into Thursday to defend its gay marriages and sued the state of California claiming that bans banning same-sex matrimony are unfair and unenforceable.

The municipal lawsuit follows marriages granted the week of more than 2,000 marriages carried out by the city over the past week were simply illegal and wouldn't be recognized.

The suit is the latest move in the explosive saga of the free-wheeling US city's move a week ago to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, despite a California statute forbidding matrimony to couples of the same sex.

Gay couples from across the country have been officially wed here since San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom launched his bold, controversial campaign of civil disobedience to challenge what he says are unconstitutional and discriminatory statutes.

"The rights afforded by California's constitution clearly trump laws restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples," San Francisco's top legal officer, City Attorney Dennis Herrera said after filing the suit.

"San Francisco seeks an unequivocal declaration from the court that state provisions limiting same-sex marriages are unconstitutional," he said.

The counter-suit comes after two conservative groups filed their own legal attacks on the same-sex marriages, seeking to have them immediately halted and to have unions already carried out be declared invalid.

While two San Francisco judges separately declined the groups' demands for injunctions, a second hearing in one of the cases was due Friday and would result in a court order halting the gay marriages that are drawing same-sex brides and grooms from across the country to San Francisco.

The city's suit contends that three sections of the California Family Code prohibiting marriage between gay couples are void, unconstitutional and unenforceable because they discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender.

Herrera said a declaration on whether banning same-sex marriages is unconstitutional was needed to ascertain whether the city was within its rights to issue marriage documents that have been ordered to unleash the issuance of "void and invalid" licenses to "frivolous and private."

But Schwarzenegger and California's top legal officer made it clear the state would not recognize the altered vows nor marriage certificates issued by San Francisco.

"I will abide by the oath I took when I was sworn in to uphold California's laws," Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

"The marriage certificates submitted to the Department of Health Services by the City and County of San Francisco fail to meet legal standards."

On Wednesday US President George W. Bush said he was "troubled" by the same-sex marriages and the fact that the judges had not immediately stopped them.

California's Democratic Attorney General Bill Lockyer said Thursday that while he supported equal protection for all, he, too, was forced to enforce the law.

"As a lifelong defender of civil rights, due process and equal protection for all, I do not personally support policies that give fewer legal rights and responsibilities to committed same-sex couples than those provided to heterosexual couples," he said. AFP

Singapore cell phone thefts up

SINGAPORE—One of work 23-year-old Brenda Khalid Yeasel arrested servant shop-ping mails for vul-nerable teenagers sporting Singapore's finest ubiquitous fashion accessory an expensive mobile phone.

In one of the world's safest and most technology-ob-sessed nations—where four out of five people own mobile handsets — Yeasel was at the vanguard of a crime spree on that has set spread alarmingly fast last year.

Releasing a battery of statistics on Friday showing across crimes including murder and robbery rising for a second straight year in one of the safest nations on earth.

But police said theft of mobile phones was the fastest growing crime of 2003.

In 2003, there were 2,870 reported cases of robbery and theft of hand phones, up 16 per cent from 2002, said Raja Kumar, director of the police intelligence department. Reuters

Redefine Modern Living
With The Best Italian Furniture

cappellini
Driade
Moroso
Poltrona Frau
Molteni
Kartell
Natuzzi
calia
NATUZZI

DEXTERTON HOME BOUTIQUE
737 Sgt. E. Rivera St., Near Buendia Village, Buendia City
Tel. 893-1111 / 897-8888 Fax No. 893-8548
Email: dexterton@dexterton.com www.dexterton.com

FBI'S BIGGEST SCALP

Former Enron CEO Skilling indicted for fraud

HOUSTON, Texas—Former Enron chief executive Jeffrey Skilling was indicted in US district court Thursday for allegedly defrauding investors by cooking the company's books prior to its collapse in 2001.

The 50-year-old Harvard-educated businessman was taken into court with his hands cuffed behind his back after turning himself into the Federal Bureau of Investigation early Thursday.

He pleaded not guilty to 28 counts of fraud and insider trading and was released on a $5-million bond.

Outside court, the once high-flying executive, known for his arrogant manner, remained silent as his lawyers protested his innocence.

SKILLING

"Jeff Skilling has nothing to hide. He didn't steal. He didn't lie. He didn't take anyone's money," said one of his lawyers, Daniel Petrocelli, claiming that prosecutors were looking for a "scapegoat" for the corporation's failure.

Skilling is the highest-ranking Enron Corp. official to be indicted by federal prosecutors probing the company's collapse in December 2001, amid a massive accounting scandal.

He has steadfastly denied any knowledge of wrong-doing during his tenure as chief executive officer, and later chief executive officer, telling a congressional hearing that he believed the company to be in good financial health when he left in August 2001.

But the indictment alleges that Skilling collaborated with others to mislead investors, regulators, analysts and credit ratings companies through a series of accounting "gimmicks" including the use of off-balance sheet partnerships.

He and Enron's then-accountant Richard Causey, "oversaw a massive conspiracy to cook the books at that company and to create the illusion that it was a robust, growing company with limitless potential," said deputy US attorney general James Comey.

In fact, "Enron was an increasingly troubled business, kept afloat by a lifeline of gimmicks and manoeuvres... gimmicks and manoeuvres that amounted to an out and out fraud."

Four months after Skilling resigned as CEO, the energy trader filed for bankruptcy when it became clear that the company had concealed billions of dollars in debt and grossly inflated its earnings through accounting tricks.

Its collapse left some 20,000 employees about $85 billion out of pocket and cost thousands of employees their jobs and life savings.

It was the biggest US corporate bankruptcy on record at the time and a huge embarrassment to President George W. Bush's administration which had close ties with the company's chief Kenneth Lay.

Skilling's indictment comes a month after former chief financial officer Andrew Fastow struck a plea deal with prosecutors, and agreed to cooperate with the two-year federal probe into the company's collapse.

Fastow's plea requires him to serve 10 years and forfeit $23 million in cash and assets, but 98 other counts against him will be dismissed if he satisfies prosecutors that he has shared with them everything he knows.

The development was expected to lead to the indictment of the company's two highest-ranking officials: Skilling and former chief executive Kenneth Lay. AFP

"MY TASTE IS SIMPLE; I JUST WANT THE BEST."
OSCAR WILDE

Malayan Plaza simplifies things. Start with a perfect location: ADB Avenue, across Podium, near your favourite malls, restaurants, schools, and business landmarks. Then consider the fabulous units and extraordinary amenities. Also think of this as an investment continuously appreciating through the years. Simple enough? Reserve now. Pre-starts at P15,000 a month. Model units available for viewing at the site. Reserve now. Call Malayan Sales Office: 6988-1640 to 48, 8927-1745/63, 8920-7480/90, 8929-1868/69. Or email: malayanplaza@sgcmail.com

The Malayan Plaza

New, everything's just a walk away!

ADB Ave., across Podium, Ortigas Center

MALAYAN INSURANCE

OPEN HOUSE! FEB. 22, 2004, 8:30-5:30 pm

Sumcad, 4 Pinoys lead Open 'rabbits'

By Jong Arcano

CEBU: Ironwood fired the only sub-par score—a one-under 71—in the top tier Elite qualifying round to grab the coveted first other Filipino "rabbit" for next week's ONE-Philippine Open golf classic pairings at the Longer course of the Riviera Country Club in Minglanilla, Cebu.

But jaegerlite Remijio Camping was not among them.

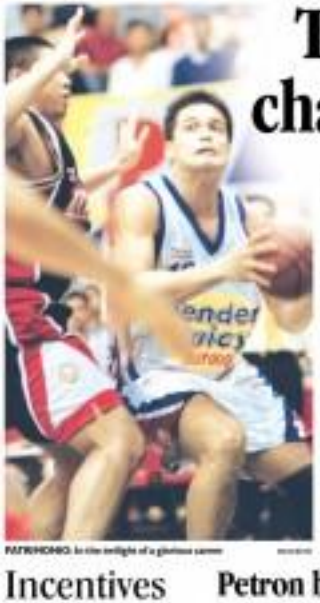
Ironwood picked up three birdies in a four-hole stretch from the sixth to the ninth of the Complex course as he toured the 18 qualifiers from a field of 22 starters, including two Japanese and three South Koreans, into the big bomb starting Thursday.

Also making it were Aquiles Erdiaquez Tendencia, Filipinos Lito Sevaquin and Dhante Quinchiliro who all carded 73s, fourth Korean Lee Seung Ki and Chris Min Gyu, who fired 74s; Edgardo Mendoza (MP) and Rim Chang Hee (HK), who shot 75s; Makoto Kinohara (Japan), 76; and Randy Cantada (MP), 77.

Aside from Hee and Chu, who are amateurs, all the rabbits will have a shot at the $14,225 (about P1.1 million) first prize at stake in the Open presented by Jun Miguel Beer, with 500 added bonuses for the full-set "Tinolabet" spectacle set to begin at the Legacy course, Mimosa, 8000 Subic, Cebu, hosted by the City of Malolos.

Campaign's bid for history encountered a big early roadblock as she slipped from a hall of six consecutive bogeys from the second. She wound up tied for 13th.

The 36-year-old Fil-Cebuano was hoping to join Filipina Princess Rita Quinones as the first female entries in the Open since its inception.



PATRIMONIO: In the twilight of a glorious career

The old star chases career milestones

ALVIN Patrimonio has a couple of numbers on his mind as he enters his 17th season as a pro in the Philippine Basketball Association.

The first figure is 14, the number of points he needs to reach the 10,000-career point plateau. And since 1986, the point he still needs to move past Abet Guidaben in No. 11 in the all-time scoring list.

An assist short of 2,000, the numbers the Purefoods star hooks most are 40 and 1...figures associated with the Los Angeles Lakers' Karl Malone, who, Alvin knows, is among the yardsticks of longevity and excellence in the NBA.

Malone also off is past 40 but remains No. 1 in the power forward/center in basketball's biggest cage. "I hope to reach that age and be regarded among the top players of the league," said Patrimonio, a four-time PBA Most Valuable Player.

The former Mapua star is among the league's senior citizens at 37—the third oldest, in fact, after Chris Jackson and Jerry Codiñera...and the 2004 campaign represents the last season of a three-year contract he signed with Purefoods in 2002.

But if he had his way, those years is stay around as long as he can. For as long as Purefoods wants him there, and for as long as the motivation, desire and competitive fire are still burning inside him.

Those desires changed, though. He no longer is the main man but just one of the options in a team in talent mixed it reminds him of the two days of the late '90s and early '00s.

Patrimonio is also nursing off his most seasons of 4.5 points, 2.2 rebounds and 15 minutes a game.

His streak of consecutive games is still alive at 538, but he is still nursing a calf injury that is keeping him out of practice just days into the new season.

SPORTSWATCH

Aguilar begins defense of moto crown

AGUILAR

RIZAL'S United Islands Aguilar tries to cement his status as the region's top rider when he opens defense of his Asian crown in the first leg of the FIM Asian Championship in Bali, Indonesia, on Sunday. Aguilar, who is being sent to Bali by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Nemsaa), headed by its president, Ken Felizo, will have his hands full against the local riders from Japan, Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, China, Thailand, Taiwan, Sri Lanka and host Indonesia. Federasi Internasionale de Motorsiklet (FIM) Asian Motorcross president Mickey Gonzaga is joining Aguilar in the motocross festival, which will have its second stop in Puerto Princesa City next month. "The premiere is our veteran athlete you see—he's already 37 years old. Aguilar, who made history last year when he became the first Filipino to win Asia's most coveted motocross title, figures he's still in his prime and will be going for a record fifth crown. He is also tied with another hero still during the PBA's second stage in 1st Mass.

St. James barges into WVL final four

ST. JAMES Academy of Malabon overtook host Bacoor City to complete the semifinal cast in the high school division of the 8th Milo-Hi-Fi Shooters Volleyball League (WVL) at the Bacoor College's gym. The LIMA ladies topped their hosts Saints-Colonel, 26-11, 26-13, and Imelgada Lady of Lourdes School, 26-24, 25-12, to join early semifinalists San Antonio de Padua College, St. Dominic's College and Our Lady of Fatima of Malabon. College de San Juan completed a sweep of its 10 elimination assignments by beating Christopher School, 25-21, 25-12, to advance to the semifinals. Female Learning Center and St. Benedict College also made it to the elementary division's final four by the filing their respective wins.

Vita-Arpilleda in Tuesday pool challenge

BRETHREN Aaron Gareza veterans, Nicko Arpilleda, will try to dethrone defending champion Johnson Vita in the Search for Tuesday the 13th 9-Ball Pool Tournament at the Robinsons Galleria. Vita, a 9-1 favorite in favor of Negrense, Laguna, found Butch Gareza too tough to crack but managed to pull off a 13-9 victory in their rematch showdown last week in the round robin tournament by Tuesday. Robinsons Malls, Accel, Hapee Cigarettes and Remington Billiards, the official tables in the many-time national player Arpilleda, Vita knows his most dangerous opponent today are also Bert-mate Gareza and Jeffrey Ramos, who both will be joined over 8PM. Antonio Dy Jr., with hosts Danny Fermano and Bert as forecast. "Who manager" ratings and handicaps will be facing a strong field this time," said Vita. Meanwhile, buildings can at Unit Lee 6101 registration for first-time tournament supported by billiards partner Distribution China on March 6 at Remington Billiards in the Pasig Robinsons Galleria. For inquiries, call the Corporate Billiards League secretariat at 554 8827/8829 or log on to www.corporatebilliardsleague@yahoo.com.

Milo Checkmate clinic begins today

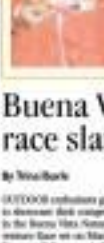
A SPECIAL Milo Checkmate Saturday clinic will be held for the veterans in Metro Manila starting today and in Cebu, Mati, Puerto Princesa, Bacolod, Davao, Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro next month. The clinic is Metro Manila will be held at Ayala Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan, from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Philippine Sports Complex to settle the Batasan Hills, Quezon City from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and at the South Bend of the Ayala complex at SM Cherry Mall, at 1001 Aurora Blvd. from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Barangay Commonwealth from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m. The Sunday session in Pasig, Bataan, will be held at the 2nd Floor of Walter Mart from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. Simultaneous activities by trained and registered chess coaches will be held at the following venues: Cebu City, Mati, Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro and Puerto Princesa.

Rob-Air Makati fun run tomorrow

BIG AIR Village of Makati City is holding a fun run of 21.1K and 10K tomorrow. Organized by Jim Saez, Jojo Villanueva, Rudy Salvador, Mike Mendoza, and Rommy Bautista's health conscious headed by Hagonoy Chamber Orthopedic, and with the full support of barangay chair Constancio Lobaton, the 10K to 21K in Pasay San Juan Bypass to promote cardiovascular awareness among Rob Air residents. Participants will be divided into seven age categories. Participants may register at the barangay offices up to noon today. The race is open to all residents of the barangay. Prizes await the winners.

AHMC golf fund-raiser set March 13

THE ASIAN Hospital and Medical Center will hold its annual institutional golf tournament on March 13 at the Sherwood Hills Golf Club in Cavite. The tournament is AHMC's fund-raising project to support the hospital's humanitarian services. For inquiries, call its Humanitarian Mission at 771-9000 or humanitarian at 816-3000.



YEAR'S BEST: National coach Martin Buenaventre (right) presents the Arlena Female Person of the Year award to Rosalie Espadilla, an Education major at the Gordon College whose feat who dominated the women's sabre event and swept all top of the 3rd Bantamweight National Interschool fencing championships recently. The awards, sponsored by Arthrex, the milk for runners.

Incentives for coaches out Tuesday

THE SOUTHEAST Asian Games incentives for the coaches and trainers will be ready by Tuesday.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Ricardo Dalisay promised this yesterday after some coaches complained about the delay in their incentives amounting to P4.25 million.

"We will be ready by Tuesday at the latest," said Dalisay, adding the delay was due to some documentary requirements to claims since some gold medalists didn't employ national coaches.

"Actually, I think we will be ready by Monday, but just to make sure, we will give it Tuesday so that everybody's happy," Dalisay added.

The bonus for coaches is provided under RA 9064, otherwise known as the Athletes and Coaches Incentives Act. According to the incentive scheme, a gold medal assures a coach of P50,000, a silver P25,000 and bronze P15,000.

The country won 49 golds, 37 silvers and 71 bronzes to place fourth overall in the last SEAG.

Coaches need to submit the training records, receipts with the signatures of the medal-winning athletes. —Mary Anthony Reyes

Petron beach volley starts today

A MIDDY rain of the beautiful and the beauty will be in the spotlight today when the first stop of the 2004 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball tournament comes off the wraps at the Clearwater Country Club in Panglao.

The quarterly beach volleyfest, presented by Petron, will have 20 women teams in competition round beginning at 1 p.m. today. The pairings of the 10 teams composed of two volleyball players each will be drawn by lots.

Clearwater CEO Ike Medarda, together with officials from Petron and Sportcity, the official outfitter, will make the ceremonial serve to open the two-day volleyball tournament.

A new champion will be crowned in the finals tomorrow since past champion have been excluded from taking part in the first leg.

The past champions will have their chance to atone their stuff in the succeeding legs, according to organizer Erika Abando, a former assistant secretary of the Philippine Sports Commission.

The tournament is also expected to gather a good field since this year to determine the year's new beach volleyball queens," she said.

Leading the field are the veteran team of Lou Matanza and Sherlin Anne Santos, rookie setter Isabel Granada and Maynel Deses, and newcomers Sherwal Sitting and Jessica Macalino.

The champion will receive P 200,000 and sweepsby while the runner-up will get P5,000.

2 GMs, 6 IMs vying in PCMA chess

GRANDMASTERS Joey Antonio and Dong Villamayor and Asian Zonal champion IM Ronald Dableo head a stellar cast vying series in the 6th inspired tournament of the Philippine Chess Masters Association (PCMA) tomorrow at the PSC Canteen at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The seven-round Swiss System event is being held to celebrate the 77th birthday of Honorio Camporaneses, honorary president of the World Chess Federation (Fide) and the country's first national master.

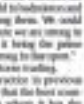
Aside from Antonio, Villamayor and Dableo, the other top contenders are Eli Glen Cuenca, Isidoro Montano Jr., Bernardo Sora, Richard Bitoon and Rudy Rodriga.

The host's share of P30,000 from a total pot of P77,000 will go to the champion, with the second placer getting P15,000 and the third placer P10,000.

Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. on tournament day. For inquiries, call Chito Garcia, PCMA vice president, at 951-7/933-9908. —Primo Ibarra

Bargaining leverage

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

I RISPECT it.

Like me, Ming Ramos, the former First Lady, had also questioned the move to strike badminton out from the list of disciplines for next year's SEA Games in Manila.

The source of that bit of news was Richie Garcia himself, who heads the technical committee of the Philippine Olympic Committee tasked to draft the list of games to be contested in the 2005 Manila SEA Games. Richie was appointed to that post by Cito Dayrit, the POC president.

"Yes, you are right," said Richie Garcia, calling me overnight his cellphone. "Badminton was not included in the initial list of sports to be contested in the 2005 Manila SEA Games."

I had written about its scrapping. My main argument was we just couldn't ignore the sudden surge in popularity of badminton in our country.

Even, how can we kill a phenomenon?

Badminton has become a craze this side of the globe that warehouses are now being converted into badminton courts in wild abandon.

For another, we already had a Marcus Liem proudly representing badminton for the country in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics; we may yet discover more Marcus for next year's SEA Games, if not the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The prospects are that bright, indeed.

"But don't worry, partner," said Richie Garcia. "The list is not final. Badminton is presently not in the list but everything is still negotiable at this stage."

That was reassuring enough.

But why remove it now and then restore it later?

"Part of our bargaining leverage against our home neighbors," he said. "Some countries are also keen to hostile for the gold to badminton and definitely, we are not among them. We could put in other disciplines where we are strong in exchange for badminton, it being the prime choice of some countries coming to the open."

So there's bargaining, then, in the game.

It has been the ugly practice in previous SEA Games competitions that the host country run smart disciplines where it has the strongest chance to win gold medals. Richie is not saying we will do that, too. But if I get the drift, we might also do it, albeit, subtly. Pinoys should be the name of the game.

In the last SEA Games in Vietnam, its swimming has been the silver target of some countries among participating countries. It was a sport that gave Vietnam, the overall runaway champion, a gold mine.

"We want to avoid a repetition of that and other practices in the past of other hosts," said Richie Garcia. "In fact, we can also produce our own gold mine."

He cited basketball.

"Basketball is our number one sport," said Richie Garcia. "But, we can do away with the nine-gold medals in basketball that the man-dated quota. Like, we can introduce the three-point shot contest, the three-versus-three format, or even the dribbledart. Maliskas ripe there. No one can stop us from introducing innovations just so we could make more gold medals in basketball. We are really serious when we mean our gold medal collection. But no, we intend not to do that. We still were able to put up a SEA Games edition that will not humiliate the spirit of the competitions."

Good job, Richie. Here's to your commendable move to maximize the competitive aspect of sportsmanship.

But now that badminton ain't really out of the water, I also hope that cycling—yes, cycling, the sport of my youth—will also not face its birth in the 2005 Manila SEA Games calendar.

But, what's this report I got the other day that bowling also chooses has its footing in the initial deliberations?

You left bowling in your son's SEA Games in Manila, you might as well kill basketball, too. And cycling. For its patronage, badminton and bowling your control.

Here's one to the overall championship.

Buena Vista Adventure race slated in 2 towns

By Nina Ruelo

OUTDOOR enthusiasts get a chance to showcase their competitive skills in the Buena Vista Nature Park Adventure Race set on March 6 at the Tagaytay Ridges area in Batangas.

Participants from different sports and fitness clubs are expected to join the first race event organized by the Metro Adventure Racing Club (MARC) and hosted by the Buena Vista Nature Park and Country Club.

The new sport of adventure racing, said to be "the future of all activities sports", combines the elements of mountain biking, trekking, kayaking, and rope climbing.

"Adventure racing is a multi-skill discipline that tests individual strengths, but team dynamics also play a big role in winning," said tournament organizer Max Manalo.

There are plans to hold the race yearly because of the high level of interest it has generated, he added.

Teams of three to five members may join in the Junior/Beginner (13-20 years old), Corporate/Executive and Open categories. Seven 21 years old, Celebrity/Media and the Open Class divisions.

At least two members who are qualified in a particular age group or profession should be part of the team's roster, and all teams should have at least one female member.

MARC is also holding training clinics prior to the race on Feb. 21 and 28. For more details about the race and the clinics, interested parties may call 817-1621 or get more info/information and download registration forms at the organizers' website at www.adventure.com.ph.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Publisher ...
Editor in Chief ...
Managing Editor ...
Assistant Editor ...
News Editor ...
Opinion Editor ...
Editorial Editor ...
Copy Editor ...
Senior Desk Editor ...
Editorial Consultant ...
Chief Photographer ...
Art & Design Director ...

Board Chairman ...
President ...
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing ...
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services ...
VP for Advertising ...
AVP for Circulation ...

Incurable doubt

THE STALBTON og Magkakaisang Pilipino has provided a team of experts who will advise opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. on the full range of issues he will have to address if he is elected president. The 19 members of the team, which includes well-known economists like Raul Fabella, dean of the UP School of Economics and Bernardo Villegas of the University of Asia and the Pacific, were said to have been recruited by Poe to help him craft his economic program as well as his priorities of government.

EDITORIAL

"We have what we believe is the most potent group of economists and planners that can be formed," said KNP spokesman, Sen. Francis Escudero, who described the advisers as "intelligent, experienced, pragmatic and patriotic." Poe's erstwhile spokesman, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, said the advisers liked Poe and were willing to help him. "The more fact that they were impressed with him should give peace of mind to those who are skeptical of his capabilities as a leader," Sotto added.

Not at all. If the intention was to assure and impress the skeptics, particularly those in the business community, the long-awaited announcement didn't achieve its purpose. If Poe looked up to his advisers and they were impressed by him, business leaders didn't sound very enthusiastic about either of them. Donald Dee, vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, conceded that the advisers were "extremely qualified" to give expert advice, but added that he wished there were more people "with actual experience" in business and government. Raul Concepcion Bautista indicated that he would have been more comfortable if there were more "seasoned personalities" on the team to help Poe run the government and manage the economy.

Poe's advisers are some exciting possibilities in a Poe presidency. Benjamin Diokno, chair of the Economics and Governance Department of De La Salle University, said: "I really believe we need to have an honest person in government whom the public can trust so that people will invest and pay taxes. From there we can generate jobs and then other (ac) will fall into place." Villegas said he agreed to be one of Poe's advisers because he was "sincere" and he had the "trust and confidence of the people."

But among businessmen, trust and confidence in Poe's capacity to govern are in short supply. From the time it was rumored that he would seek the presidency, every rise in Poe's political fortune has been followed by a fall in the value of the peso and the prices of stocks. Poe's "social covenant" or economic platform (or what his people tried to pass off as one) failed to excite the business community. Now his team of advisers is being dismissed by businessmen leaders as short on exciting as an economics lecture on a hot and lazy afternoon. long in theory and short in experience. It is beginning to look as if the skepticism of the business community about a Poe presidency has become incurable.

Some of Poe's advisers are trying to dispel such doubts by pointing to his good track record as a movie producer and his ability to listen. Villegas, who disclosed that he gave Poe lessons in economics, said the actor found it easy to absorb what he was told. Victor Macalalag, a former Bacnotan executive, said Poe "has depth of mind, knows how to analyze problems and knows his priorities."

Spoken like good members talking about the class genius. But if Poe were so bright, why did he not finish high school? If he had his priorities right, why did he not strive to earn a degree? Would these professors care to lecture their prisoners on the lesser who toils from dawn to midnight and scrimps on food just so his child can finish secondary education? What about those who do menial jobs to finance their college education, should they just drop their books and rely on their native intelligence, their bravery and their sincerity to bring them to the highest office?

Any academic would be flattered to have a leading presidential candidate listening to his lore. But anyone who says effective governance can be crammed into a few brief lessons is a fraud. And assuming people they would best be served by someone who is ill-equipped and unprepared to decide on complex matters of state is the biggest basis of all.

Businessmen know this and they are afraid to take the risk. Poe's academic advisers, like his political supporters, are urging the Filipino people to just close their eyes and take a leap into the unknown.

The importance of being Poe-gi

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto A. Cruz

OVE been following the Democratic Party primaries in the United States from the time Howard Dean became the front runner early this year only to be jettisoned by John Kerry in Iowa and other states. With his impressive victories against the other candidates, Kerry seems to have already clinched his party's nomination as its standard bearer in the coming presidential election.

There are personality factors that have influenced the choice of the voters, like Kerry's heroism in Vietnam and the current Hollywood star John Edwards. Wesley Clark was criticized for running Democrat after he was slighted by the Republicans and later when he compared Kerry's and with Bin even to combat general Joseph Lieberman and Dirk Gephardt, veterans of past elections, received scant consideration because they were not "new faces." It was generally required that the aspirants be personally likable to the electorate, which is the reason they have tried to put their best foot—and face—forward.

But the candidates have also had to take on important issues on the various issues considered important by the voters in elections. It is not enough that they want to be president; they must tell the people what they intend to do if they are elected. Each of them is advocating particular projects and programs, although all are by taking a closer look at President Bush's decision to go to war against Iraq that has not revealed a bright prospect of mess disengagement.

In our country elections are based on personalities, not issues. In fact, there is no dispute on the issues among the several political parties in contention. Every political platform is an expression of motherhood aspirations like national sovereignty, condemnation of corruption, improvement of the economy, eradication of criminality, protection of human rights, reform of the judiciary, and other similar laudables.

The political parties themselves have no distinctive ideological divisions or even practical identification. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's party is now known as the Lakas-CMD, which was first known as the Lakas-NUCD, which was first known as Lakas ng Bansa. Fernando Poe Jr.'s headquarters in Magkakaisang Pilipino includes not only the original Erap boodlums but also some of their former mortal enemies. Raul Roco's almost Democratic counterparts in the Aksyon Demokratiko counts as its allies Reporma and Promdi, originally separate independent parties. Panfilo Lacson claims to be the legitimate nominee of the LDP but has been effusive not to Edgardo Angara as its president. The two Eddie's are only added to the general confusion.

Until the 1987 Constitution established the multi-party system, there was not much confusion among the voters when only two dominant parties clogged it out during the elections. The united when Manuel Roxas defected from the Nacionalista Party and formed the Liberal Party as his rebuke to Manuelismo. Even in my name, the Nacionalista Party continued to prosper in espousal of nationalism while the Liberal Party preached a new allegiance to the United States. Although there were occasional deviations from the system, it was this political difference that divided the two major parties then and gave the voters a clear choice between them.

As the present term of the presidential campaign, the electorate has not been asked to choose among the several platforms because none of them is substantial or new. All the candidates do is sing and dance, raise ethnic consciousness, eat with their fingers, clench their fists to show they are brave, debate the irrelevant, meet with penitents, and kneel by an ox and kneel to shake the hands of voters usually assembled by duped for costly inducements. The audiences do not choose what these antics mean other than Gad and entertain, and it is just like them, of course, to kneel during the campaign.

For lack of substantial issues, many voters are simply using their own criteria for choosing their candidate. To many of them, the mere appearance of the aspirant should be the controlling consideration, which is why they like to be seen at the interfaith and interreligious dress-in. Pa'a pop. There is no doubt that the fellow is handsome although he has seen younger days. It is true that he is as much for Aga Muhlach when it comes to looks alone, but can Aga punch and shoot like FPJ? That is the question.

FPJ has nothing to offer but his much-much of physical attributes gods and his experience in the movies, but his detractors say these are enough to qualify him to be President of the Philippines. It matters not that during one crucial occasion when the spoke in English, he referred to an advisor as "an expertise in agriculture" and that he usually speaks of previous appointees as "a woman is qualified but his alumpihit him. When trapped and cornered on "I have to go," he will mumble "I don't know about that," at which he was asked to comment on the plummeting peso.

His politics in this country is demonstrated that we have to scrape the bottom of the barrel to choose the occupant of the highest office in our land? As Irving Berlin said in his song, "Heaven help the Philippines!"

Illusions

COMMENTARY

Leandro Dalisay V. Mercado
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE STRIKE was a congressman I was interviewing for a research project remarked that our society should reduce our politicians to irrelevance. I was mildly surprised, not so much by the statement, but because the comment came from a politician.

It has wisdom, but the advice came a little too late. Our society has already managed to glorify our politicians to that sore they have taken on larger than life personas, and most of us seem to be cautious by them. Recently, we even heard businessmen mimicking on the charming personalities of the presidential candidates on national TV. It seems that instead of us putting politicians in their place, we have been put under their spell.

Clearly, in the coming days, can only get you too far. You better have something good to offer. Because you can't hold that close up until forever.

But the campaign period is in full swing, and not one presidential candidate has offered anything new. Much just emphasize the need for us to stop giving undue attention to our candidates. We have already be led the country to ruin and reduced into a battle of personalities where candidates are judged on the basis of their looks, their "sensibilities," and their glibness.

It is high time for us to elevate the promises and resolutions higher ground by weaning it in its proper context. We need to promote rational elections so the he-all and end-all of our democracy.

Elections are important—that is a given. Through them, politicians are held accountable for their actions. They give us the opportunity to choose leaders who will be sufficiently pleasant that the majority who voted for them perceive to be good. We should restore their credibility. But the national elections is not the only democratic process that can lend the country to ruin.

Until the 1987 Constitution established the multi-party system, there was not much confusion among the voters when only two dominant parties clogged it out during the elections. The united when Manuel Roxas defected from the Nacionalista Party and formed the Liberal Party as his rebuke to Manuelismo. Even in my name, the Nacionalista Party continued to prosper in espousal of nationalism while the Liberal Party preached a new allegiance to the United States. Although there were occasional deviations from the system, it was this political difference that divided the two major parties then and gave the voters a clear choice between them.

As the present term of the presidential campaign, the electorate has not been asked to choose among the several platforms because none of them is substantial or new. All the candidates do is sing and dance, raise ethnic consciousness, eat with their fingers, clench their fists to show they are brave, debate the irrelevant, meet with penitents, and kneel by an ox and kneel to shake the hands of voters usually assembled by duped for costly inducements. The audiences do not choose what these antics mean other than Gad and entertain, and it is just like them, of course, to kneel during the campaign.

For lack of substantial issues, many voters are simply using their own criteria for choosing their candidate. To many of them, the mere appearance of the aspirant should be the controlling consideration, which is why they like to be seen at the interfaith and interreligious dress-in. Pa'a pop. There is no doubt that the fellow is handsome although he has seen younger days. It is true that he is as much for Aga Muhlach when it comes to looks alone, but can Aga punch and shoot like FPJ? That is the question.

FPJ has nothing to offer but his much-much of physical attributes gods and his experience in the movies, but his detractors say these are enough to qualify him to be President of the Philippines. It matters not that during one crucial occasion when he spoke in English, he referred to an advisor as "an expertise in agriculture" and that he usually speaks of previous appointees as "a woman is qualified but his alumpihit him. When trapped and cornered on "I have to go," he will mumble "I don't know about that," at which he was asked to comment on the plummeting peso.

His politics in this country is demonstrated that we have to scrape the bottom of the barrel to choose the occupant of the highest office in our land? As Irving Berlin said in his song, "Heaven help the Philippines!"

Misrepresentation

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ONEL BOHOM, I recently met with Vincente Tercias, 53, who fled the disqualification case against Sereno before it with the Comelec and elevated it to the Supreme Court, and his elder brother, Ambrosio, 58, who sits as his counsel. Ambrosio enrolled four FPJ's lawyer friends' donations, became visibly flustered at the Comelec when he noticed, perhaps for the first time, that the non-lawyers had submitted no FPJ's documents, and quickly left that he did not want to have his name appearing there that he did not want to have his name appearing there that he did not want to have his name appearing there

The 'masa' vote

MANY (word reads more important points in his life. A column. He argued that the mass vote is a recent phenomenon as expressed in their support of President Estrada. Prior to this, the mass vote is tilted by local and Manuelito boy elders, supporting ward leaders in powerful patrons. According to David, this important transformation from local loyalties to a national and autonomous voter was the product of the mass media, in particular television.

In its quest for a wider audience, television developed a national viewership by using Tagalog and diversity remaining a distant ideological perspective. Other factors, such as the massive movement from the countryside to the cities (including overseas Filipino workers), with their 40 fragmented residences, must have added to this increasing shift from the local to the national.

The votes may be said of masa, whose trading vote quickly transformed themselves into homogenized masses, replacing earlier ties closer to home. It was only a matter of time before such mass 'interests' their popularity into votes, too. Napoles de la Rosa in the '50s must have been the first to do so. Sentiment and loyalty thus were used to cultivate a similar relation from Filipinos during their period in power using mythology, history and monuments. They failed because reality somehow got in the way of history.

If the mass constitute 70 percent of the voting population in David classes, democracy produces a corporate group, because those with the least stake in the social order decide who its leaders will be. This may explain why this choice seems to be limited to those with larger stakes in maintaining the status quo. Elitist democracies took the precaution of ensuring that their power members had a modicum of education as well as an investment in preserving the social order. Moreover, in those early days, the mass media did not have an overarching an effect on daily life as it does now. As David says, conditions now, including the mass, has an opinion on everything.

The arguments above have a persuasive appeal but on closer inspection reveal serious flaws. I cannot enumerate them here for lack of space but one only raise some queries. Why have there significant social changes not produced other political shifts such as the rise of women, youth or religious (except Iglesia ni Cristo) voting blocks? While some actors have managed the change from stage to politics, others have failed (e.g., Nora Aunor). The present political spectrum looks remarkably like the days of the Plaza and political kingpins. While some things have undoubtedly changed, others have remained stubbornly the same. We cannot blame the mass for both the change and the continuity.

—RAUL PERTIERRA,
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City

Habitat for Humanity's founder

THANK you for your story last Feb. 5, on the students engineers from De La Salle University who plan to drum deep wells for Habitat for Humanity community in Bulacan, Bicol. I hope that your story will move those with the means to provide financial support for the project, as well as to inspire other young people to use their newly found skills and knowledge for those who need them most.

I wish to clarify though, an important point: Habitat for Humanity was not founded by former US President Jimmy Carter (a recently a volunteer), although he is more famous now. The founder of this organization is Millard Fuller.

Fuller used to be a businessman and a self-made millionaire from Alabama who, at the age of 29, decided to give up his fortune and the pursuit of wealth to pay more attention to the family and to serve God. Searching for a new home in their lives, he and his wife Linda joined Koinonia Partner, a Christian community in Americus, Georgia where people sought practical applications of their faith. Along with Koinonia's founder, a farmer and Bible scholar named Clarence Jordan, Fuller established several partnership ministries, including interfaith housing.

In 1973, Fuller and his family moved to Africa to apply their model of building decent, durable and affordable shelter for the poor in a developing country. Encouraged by its success in Zaire, the Fullers returned to Americus where, in 1976, he and his associates established a nonprofit organization, Habitat for Humanity International. The rest, as they say, is history.

In fact, Fuller will be here in the Philippines from March 13 to 15 as part of a swing through several Asian countries to visit the various Habitat organizations in this part of the world. He will also formally launch this year's 'Faith Build,' which will open as a Habitat site in Bacolod, Negros.

—CECY SANTOS,
communications director, Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation Inc., Unit 1006, Antillana Plaza Bldg., Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by *The Inquirer*, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Bignay and Alhambra Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to this (897-2703, 897-2704), or e-mail reader.advocate@inquirer.com.ph.

All letters to the editor are required to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The *Inquirer* will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

No part in newspaper ad

THIS is in response to the letter signed by former cronies accusing me of violating the law of libel.

Time also stated that First Gentleman administration was broken the Ombudsman, filed by Philippine Airlines, was dropped.

For your information, while an Ombudsman resolution dated April 28, 1998 recommending dismissal of the administrative proceedings against Lindayan was indeed issued, the was subsequently overturned in a memorandum dated June 25, 1998 approved by then Ombudsman Desierto.

The memorandum in fact recommended the dismissal of Lindayan from government service for grave misconduct and the cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of benefits and disqualification for reemployment in the government.

What Lim deliberately omitted in her letter was that on Oct. 6, 1997, the Ombudsman found sufficient prima facie evidence to indict Lindayan for violation of the Anti-Graft Law in connection with his unauthorized granting of work extensions to Singaporean nurses.

Apparently to avoid admitting Lindayan's conviction as a result of the Ombudsman's decision which found him criminally liable and perpetrator on the Ombudsman, Lindayan submitted his resignation to the President as board member of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), but just the same, the Ombudsman found him administratively liable.

—ROBERT LIM JOSEPH SR., president, Euro One Sales (CEB), Fullmarine Compound, 2333 Aurora Blvd., Pasay City

A crisis a la Argentina unlikely to happen in Philippines

YOUR news account in last "Peso sinks to P56.20 to $1 (interbank bank value of peso a la Argentina)" highlighted the warnings of Standard Chartered Bank but missed out the more important portions of the study: an which noted "there is little to suggest a crisis in the near term."

First, the report recognizes that the Philippine economy is broadly stable compared to that of Argentina before the crisis. This is a very critical difference because the Philippines has not experienced deep recession even at the height of the financial storm in 1997 and through the next six years thereafter. We do not have the makings of a country in economic crisis, in reaffirm this point, the report even went to the extent of using an anecdotal experience of brisk sales of a large food chain in the Philippines.

Second, while the report argues that "on a first cut, the Philippines' external situation looks far worse than that of Argentina pre-crisis... this position is mitigated by some positive factors." The openness of the Philippine economy is cited first. This has allowed more foreign currency to come in without fear of currency control. There is less mismatch on an economy-wide basis.

The long maturities of external debt are also very important to consider. There is less pressure on debt servicing, there is less pressure on the currency.

Industrial DPR restrictions are also critical to the equation, keeping borrowing till and to the last a year. This amount alone is about twice the annual debt payments of the country.

Finally the report also cited the country's right pricing compared to that of pre-crisis Argentina. Therefore, financing the public deficit from external sources should not be very difficult if it is necessary to do so.

In closing, allow me to clarify the questions from the report arguing that the pro-fiscal positions might raise the issue of the government's eligibility to finance the budget deficit. "This in turn leads to speculation that the government will be forced to print more money and that the Philippine peso depreciates sharply."

The report actually contradicts itself because earlier it recognized that revenue collections and not administration have improved. In fact, the national government was able to achieve its deficit target with some considerable margin for the whole year of 2005.

More important, it is not the government but the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that prints money for the whole economy. We will continue to print money for the regular requirements of the growing economy but we take strong exception to the suggestion that we will do this to finance the budget deficit.

—TERESITA S. SAYOH,
officer in charge, Department of Economic Research, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, A. Mabini cor. B. Gonzalez Streets, Malate, Manila,

Best antidote to bird flu

THE BIRD flu scare spreading across Asia is bringing death to millions of chickens and threatening the health of people. It is devastating but unknowingly predictable. The outbreaks that emerge out globe every year almost always originate in chickens, ducks and pigs living in great numbers close to people in southern China. Pigs catch a flu virus from birds then transmit a version of it to people.

The best solution to the bird flu problem is to stop eating animals for food. A suggestion that would help to prevent other more ardent diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers (see CoV-ng.com for more information). As the very least, we must stop overfeeding animals into the filthy disease-ridden factory farms.

—JASON BAKER,
Asia representative, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, 3 Connaught, Central, Hong Kong

Across the NATION

Anti-reb drive slows measles mission

HEAD START
A pile of straw hats awaits delivery to buyers in a warehouse in Consolacion, Cebu. The hats are handmade and are considered one of the products which the province is proud of.

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Military operations in some areas of the country have been slowing down the government's nationwide anti-measles drive, dubbed as Ligtas Tigdas, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit admitted yesterday.

But Dayrit said they consider the military operations in some areas, complicated by the presence of rebel or bandit groups, as a minor problem.

He said generally, the immunization drive is becoming successful because parents are now more open-minded about the need for vaccination.

Casandra Ananzo, a representative of the United Nations Children Fund (Unicef), said the military operations in Sulu and some parts of Mindanao have in some ways hampered the vaccination drive.

"The military does not allow our vaccinators to go inside one of the barangays there," Ananzo said of their human experience where the military has been burning down community rebels.

She said to remedy the situation they convinced village officials in conflict areas to help parents bring their children to nearby barangays.

Dr. Brenda Lopez, health director for Western Mindanao, said for areas in the region and for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that were identified as bandit and rebel lairs, they also adopted a similar strategy.

"Instead of the door-to-door approach where vaccinators directly go to the recipients, we tap community leaders and ask them to bring the mothers and their children to a particular area on a certain period and vaccinate them there," Lopez said.

Dayrit said amid some problems, the health department was optimistic it could achieve its goal of 100-percent vaccination by the end of the month.

He said their optimism was based on the increasing acceptance among parents that vaccination is good for their children.

Ananzo meanwhile said that aside from military operations, natural disasters have also hampered the delivery of the service.

She cited the case of Surigao, which has recently been affected by flood because of monsoonal rains.

Dayrit said the campaign has already reached about 10 percent of the 18 million children targeted for vaccination.

In the cities of Isabela, Zamboanga, Pagadian, Dapitan and Dipolog, Dayrit said health workers were able to reach 70 percent of the target.

In Zamboanga City alone, Dayrit said at least 101,000 children or 68 percent of the targeted 148,000 have already been immunized. Julie C. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2,000 rally in Cebu to support FPJ

AT LEAST 2,000 supporters of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. staged a rally in downtown Cebu City Thursday to ask the Supreme Court to render a fair judgment on the actor's disqualification case.

Members of the Pro-FPJ, Fernando Poe Jr. for President Movement and Sunday 2004 JSY for President converged at the Plaza Independencia at about 10 a.m.

They then marched to Colon Street while chanting "Buway na Filipino ayo!" along the way.

Senator Cebu City Mayor Alvin Garcia, who was in the rally, said some 2,000 to 3,000 people were at the rally. Garcia, who is running for mayor under the local opposition party Aksyon, said he joined the rally as a lawyer and not as a supporter of Poe because he believed that the actor was a natural-born Filipino.

Leander Boy Pandiringan, a drama actor who is vice president for Central Visayas of the Ang Sunday 2004 JSY for President, estimated the crowd to be between 4,000 and 5,000.

He said they could have mustered a bigger crowd if they had enough time to prepare.

It was noted, however, that those who joined the rally were given a pack of juice and biscuit as snacks. Nobody, however, would say where these came from or who financed them. Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

ROUNDUP

Driver, helper killed

DAPITAN, ALLO SANTOS, Sultan—A driver of a gasoline tanker and his helper were found dead in San Rafael town on Friday. Senior Insp. Rolando Andaya, San Rafael police chief, identified the victims as Rodolfo Bayaday and Jack Bernabe, both of Galilean, Carpayan. They died of bullet wounds in the head. Andaya said the victims' tanker, which was loaded with 8,000 liters of diesel and 6,000 liters of gasoline worth about P500,000, left for Carpayan in Pandanan, Manila, at 11:30 p.m. Thursday and was shortly flagged down by gunmen somewhere in Mati in Manila. The victims were on their way to Tagumpayan City to deliver the tanker's contents. Police said the tanker was found abandoned in Barangay Pinugo, Calamagui town, about 13 km from where the victims' bodies were found at 6 a.m. Friday. The tanker's contents were intact.
Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Pol coordinator slain

ILAGAN, Isabela—A political coordinator of a congressional candidate in this province was shot and killed by two men in Palanan town on Jan. 3, police said. Senior Supt. Nelson Sarza, Isabela police director, identified the victim as Felicito Cayat, 44, village chief of Bagabag Norte in Palanan. Sarza said Cabitac was a political coordinator of Ilonggo Mukamura and Partidong Demokratiko Pilipino-Laban ng Bayan City Councilor Anthony Miranda, a congressional candidate in the province's fourth district. Cabitac was reportedly talking to another person in front of an elementary school in the village when the suspects, who were allegedly riding a motorcycle, shot him in the back. Reports said Cabitac was the third political coordinator of Miranda who was killed since last year. Ferdinand Vinluan Jr., PDI North Luzon Bureau

Power barge pulled out

CALAPAN CITY—A power barge in Puerto Galera will be temporarily pulled out by the National Power Corp. this April. The barge, a power source of power to Oriental Mindoro, will be brought to Panay Island because of a power crisis there. In its place, Mapanuo will rent 20 megawatt (MW) land-based units. Oriental Mindoro has a power demand of 24 MW. Engineer Roberto Cavalon, Napocor Mindoro Pambansa area manager, said the land-based units are more reliable because the units can operate continuously. The Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative will bid Napocor the task to put up the generator sets.
Mahmud T. Wasik, PDI Southern Luzon

Anti-drug awards

CALAMBA CITY—For their active campaign against illegal drugs in Oriental Mindoro, four persons and entities were honored during the 103rd anniversary of the Philippine National Police in Camp Vicente Lim, in Calamba, Laguna, on Feb. 16. Honored were Chief Insp. Reynaldo L. Pascua of the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Police Office; SPO3 Jose T. Matsilenza Jr., chief of police of San Teodoro town, best senior police noncommissioned officer; the 403rd PMG led by Supt. Rodrigo A. Inja, best Mindoro policeman; police group, and RDI Braga, a non-government organization, special awardee. Mahmud T. Wasik, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Demand for marijuana falling, says DILG head

BACOLOD CITY—Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. on Thursday said international demand for marijuana has declined substantially.

Lina, in a press conference here on Thursday, said the Chinese government confirmed the waning down of the marijuana market, following a recent state agreement to share law enforcement information and resources in the fight against Chinese drug syndicates.

The National Peace and Order Council labels the Cordillera as the dominant supplier of marijuana, generating 70 percent of the weed distributed abroad.

Lina said statistical figures about the reduced marijuana demand are still being evaluated. But he said marijuana containers would shrink in domestic demand.

The Bacolodnon demand could be the reason marijuana farmers have slowly shifted their produce to environmental crops, local officials said.

Lina said he is interested in a Sangguni community initiative, led by Bagangan Mayor Rogelio Lores, to convert the underground marijuana plantations of the town into sunflower fields and greenhouses.

Lina promised to intervene in its re-survey program that would replace the Bagangan experimental and its applicability to other marijuana-producing towns.

Lina insisted a local proposal in 2000, that introduced medium- or short-term to marijuana, the said the Benguet sunflowers industry has employed more farms, and generated substantial exports, compared to the average vegetable farms.

But some farmers claimed that they were paid wholesale prices by marijuana financiers, which amounts to only 0.02 percent of the actual street value of marijuana. One farmer claimed his tourists only P100 for every kilo of marijuana they process.

Lina said Asian governments are more concerned about Chinese syndicates that have tried to relocate in the country.

He said the government had been arresting Chinese suspects, because Chinese syndicates tend to send their own chemists to shabu laboratories in the Philippines. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Campaign good news for hotels

DAVAO CITY—The political season has provided the hotel industry here with a new market, albeit temporarily.

But hotels are really making more money these days as politicians normally bring with them 20 to 30 people during their sorties in provinces near the city.

Arturo Bencio, sales and marketing manager of Waterfront Insular Hotel, said a single party-component of the candidate and his entourage already makes up 10.20 percent of a hotel's occupancy.

Bencio said the hotel industry was not bound to idle years. Joel B. Escorilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau

INQUIRER Visaya

E-mail: [illegible]
Editor: Jose Bonifacio I. Bonifacio
Executive Editor: Evelyn L. Bonifacio

The legend of Punta de Bulalacao

By Rolando O. Borrinaga
Tacloban City

ONE of my passions is trying to establish the historical basis of local myths, legends and folklore of the Leyte-Samar region. I have succeeded in unmasking the historical facts behind a few of them, but many others still stand to be decoded one at a time.

Folklore of northeastern Biliran mentioned a "Punta de Bulalacao, Isla de Panamao" (Bulalacao Point, Panamao Island). This place is a component of an entire legend complex that includes a fairy named Maria Benita, Spanish gentlemen, cargoes of treats, and even a fabled "city" on top of Mt. Panamao.

Most of the components are strangely Spanish in label and identification, suggesting that the entire legend evolved during the Spanish era.

Of course, Isla de Panamao is the ancient name of Biliran Island, which was the site of the first large-scale Spanish shipyard in the Philippines at around 1600. And course in this colony was first planted by the Jesuits in Cartagena, Leyte, according to the Relacion of Pedro Fernandez, dated 1, 1604. The Cartagena parish originally included Isla de Panamao.

The "city" on the mountaintop probably referred to the old mind from the prehistoric settlers of the eruption Mt. Panamao, whose pods glowed during dark nights, as perceived by the early Fr. Francisco Alcina in 1668. The volcano presently stays quiet a year later.

Maria Benita (Benighted Maria), the fairy, is associated with the religious controversy involving the towns of Almeria and Kawayan during the early 19th century, which saw the dissociation of the belligerent town of Almeria into a barrio of Kawayan, a former barrio that was elevated into a town by American officials.

Confused cartographer

The search then left me with finding the location of Punta de Bulalacao (Bulalacan Point).

Natives of Kawayan claim that the geographical point is probably in the vicinity of Barangay Bulalacao, a few kilometer east of the town proper. The place was named after a bird called "bulalacao" in Waray-waray and "bunakan" in Cebuano, which allegedly glows in sparkles at night.

I do not know the bird's English name, and I have not yet seen one. But it might be the same glossy ones in the "St. Elmo's Fire" (amulet) phenomenon in the folk mind.

Anyway, barangay Bulalacao does not have a prominent headland that seems to be called a point. Thus, Punta de Bulalacao must be somewhere else.

The answer dawned on me a few weeks ago, while I was scanning the Leyte-Samar sections of Spanish-era Philippine maps and trying to flesh up additional proofs for my theory on the name of Leyte in an earlier column as the narrow channel under Hilitan Bridge.

ENHANCED Spanish-era Philippine map shows the central portion of the island of Panamao (now Biliran) and the supposed Punta de Bulalacao or Punta de Bulacacao.

The first detailed map of the Philippines was drawn up by Jesuit Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde in 1744. It was published in Manila in 1749 as part of his "Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañia de Jesus."

The cartographer was apparently confused about where Panamao Island was closest to Leyte. He bore the island and made it appear almost connected to the mainland in two areas—at the source and west of northern Leyte, respectively. He was wrong.

Earlier, in 1668, Father Alcina, who probably had not traveled through the island, likewise in his way to Samar where he served many years as a missionary, was himself confused about the location of Pegar Point (Sabanday Point). His narrative placed this on the northeastern point of Leyte, along the seaward, eastward of the island opposite Cebu.

In Alcina's time, the easternmost part of Cebu across northern Leyte was known to the Spaniards as "Bulalegui," (for the pilots), who understood the local language, knew better. He said the coastline's configuration of the native phrase "bulo bao" (i.e., bird shirts), which is obscure in the Bisayan language. In English, it is "penis bird bag."

In the 1744 map, the northernmost point of Cebu, placed on almost the same latitude directly west of Panamao, was labelled Punta de Bulalegui. Its nearest village, on the vicinity of the present Daanbantayan, was known as Candigui. This village was probably the Cebu extension of the Kan-Diyo (of the Big Boat) kingdom in Samar.

A joke!

There might have been an intended joke that escaped the Spaniards. The ones who was famous for his big boat was also famous for a huge physical endowment.

After 1749, Spanish traders who traveled on their cargo boats probably brought along with them a copy of Fr. Murillo Velarde's map. While in Isla de Panamao to take in cargoes of cacao, they would presumably ask from the locals about Punta de Bulalegui, which was supposed to be visible west of the island.

Unfortunately, then and now, the northern part of Cebu could not be seen from Biliran Island or sea level. And the natives, in trying to figure out the strange word, might have heard "bulalacao" and pointed to the habitat of the "sparkler" birds north—not west—of the island.

And there started a legend. In due time, the language confusion evolved to the folk name a mirage known as Punta de Bulalacao, which may not be found in Isla de Panamao.

Iloilo coffee shop percolates with political ideas

By Ma. Elena Lubien
Iloilo City

TUCKED between dry good stalls and fruit stalls in Lapuz Market in Iloilo City is the Kapihan ni Madge, an unpretentious coffee house that has been the favorite of generations of politicians, entrepreneurs and paisans from all walks of life.

At 6 a.m., the place is alive with all kinds of characters and conversations that Iloilo has. Chatting coffee mugs, they take their seats to discuss every imaginable problem this city and this world have.

This election season, Madge is the popular hang out of political parties and candidates, especially while politicians may lash out at each other in campaign speeches, they are expected to behave civilly at the Kapihan ni Madge. There are no written rules but they are expected to treat each coffee habitue with respect, regardless of political or religious stake.

The Kapihan ni Madge is one of the most popular coffee houses in the city, and probably one of the enduring democratic institutions. It is one area where people get together freely and have open conversations, according to owner Dexter de la Cruz, the third generation of De la Cruzes to run the place.

Dexter inherited the coffee house from his father Gerardo, who died last year. The late Gerardo, in turn, inherited it from his father Vicente, who named the place after his late wife Magdalena.

FITTER de la Cruz, the manager-owner of the coffee house.

Price took over the family business a little more than a year ago. He left his job of ten years as a mall and learned the ropes of running a coffee shop, steering them making sure that the Madge coffee, a brew from locally grown coffee beans, tastes like the way it has always been served for the last 45 years.

Center of sociability

The Kapihan has considered La Paz Market its home. The market is interconnected by its historic culinary offering, La Paz batchoy, and recently market hubs Iloilo. There must be something in La Paz that makes it a home to many locals in Iloilo history, and yesterday the Kapihan is sure to join their historic list.

Price did little to change the atmosphere. He did some repainting and enclosed the area a little. He did not try to install air-conditioning as many upscale coffee shops had. He decided to retain the number feel as a source of sociability of the well-heeled and unlisted, of haves and not-haves.

He did introduce something new—a bulletin board. There, politicians and advocates of whatever causes post their political platforms and invite locals to be the audience. Another goes also post their views. Some managers to pick up a kilo of fish or rice or some love notes from unrequited love.

The Kapihan at Madge regulars include farmer-city mayors Mariano Hofilena of Santa Barbara, Boy Tupas of Sara, who is now running for mayor under the opposition ticket.

Sandra sometimes starts her day at Madge, taking her regular coffee, which is a potent brew for the uninitiated, in between scoops of ripe papaya and bites of bread dunked in coffee.

"This is my other head quarters," Sandra said. "The in where I felt render my debate with a politician, where interest and shadows of Boongo society go."

Senators and congressmen, whenever they are in town and wanted to touch base with the mass, visit the Kapihan as a matter. The place is also meeting of the La Paz Development Foundation, a civic group that is behind the beautification of the La Paz plaza. Madge is also the coffee house of choice for Marcos.

Cheap, good coffee

Coffee is cheap at Madge. A cup costs P10 to P15.

Price said they roasted their own coffee bought from farms in the northern towns of Iloilo. Regulars have their own coffee mugs with their names on it.

Servers, like Rolinda Sumparal, 50, can remember the preferences of the regular customers: black, sweetened, black, strong, plain, light or decaf with milk.

One social thinker said coffee house belonged to the new arenas of public life, actually part of the public sphere where people organized themselves on bases of opinions. The politicians were right in choosing coffee houses, like the Kapihan ni Madge, as their stumping boards and listening posts. They are safe places where face-to-face talk about news and their meaning occur, and truly private sort of political debates.

Kidnap-for-ransom plot uncovered

AT FIRST, residents thought it was just another one of the "Body Found" reports that had become so common in local media in the past months. The discovery of the bludgeoned body of school principal Regie Naipa Patil in a grassy portion of the Villa Angela Subdivision in Bacolod City, however, led to the unearthing of far more sinister motives than the mere killing of a gang war or robbery victim.

It was quickly pieced out by police, and with the confession of two of the suspects, Patil, who was their friend, had not been the target but a Canadian visitor he was hosting. The group had planned to kidnap the foreigner for ransom, they disclosed, and Patil was done to refuse he apparently rejected our cooperation.

Patil's son not only the Canadian, Ray Tuck, 67, who had been supporting some scholars at the Talisaid-old Elementary School, that the kidnappers were after. As the two suspects confessed little-by-little to local media, it was the Tuck who apparently made a target list of seven Bacolod businessmen.

The Canadian has since flown home, and the seven would-be victims are thanking their lucky stars that the plot had been uncovered.

* * *

AS POLICE talks between the government and the communist National Democratic Front were going on in Oslo, Norway, a group of about 50 New People's Army rebels raided an encampment of the 61st Infantry Battalion in Barangay Cambaraguis, Himamaylan town, on Sunday.

Two suspected rebels were killed, while two soldiers and a civilian were slightly wounded. The rebels were able to snatch six firearms from the camp.

Recently, NPA rebels burned a bus of Alliance Transit Inc., making it the twelfth of the Cebu-based buses to be torched since 2002. The management of the bus line has consistently refused to pay "revolutionary taxes" to the rebels who have threatened further attacks.

The police director of Negros Occidental, who has identified some suspects in the burning, is frustrated because neither the drivers nor the bus collector who had witnessed the attack would sign affidavits for fear of retaliation. So far, no charges have been filed against any of the perpetrators.

BACOLOD EXCHANGE

Neofa R. Lamparas

* * *

AS FAR as the sugar industry is concerned, the weighty problem of plummeting prices that had sometimes Dorly planters and labor groups in the past fortnight has somewhat eased when President Aquino Arroyo decided to put an end to their misery by declaring the National Food Authority to buy the local produce.

The crisis had so roiled the industry that even former governors Daniel Lacson and Lito Gonzalez joined tenant-leader Joseph Montalvo in looking for solutions. The summit planned with the President in Malacañang on August 1 took place after the NFA order, but still, some look at this as a band-aid solution.

* * *

A MOMENTARY distraction at the height of the sugar price crisis was the arrival in Bacolod of movie actress Sunsa Rosos, a former resident who is married to prominent candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Although Rosos, as she is known as she was known during her school days in the city, cut the ribbon at the inauguration of her husband's local headquarters, she was careful not to say anything that could be interpreted as campaigning for him. Instead, she concentrated on reminiscences and sweetheart memory when she recalled how she had hurried back at the shoreline of Bacolod when she called to Manila to join the movies.

"I vowed to make my province more proud of me," she said. That is why, she added, she never took on roles that were only of objectionable, although they were then becoming more popular and bigger earners.

* * *

THE PROVINCE has not yet stopped talking about the exit of Rep. Apolinario Lozada Jr. (8th district) from the Lakas-CMD, of which he had always been identified as an organizer. It seems Lozada could no longer stand the heat in the kitchen where the fires of the candidacy of Mr. Macapagal's brother-in-law, Igne cio "Sun Pilot" Arroyo are being stoked with family blessings.

What hurts most, Lozada says, is that the President had gone through the motions of declining him the official candidacy of Lakas, while Igge was also declared official candidate of her own party, Kampi.

In Bacolod, the feud between Rep. Monico Puentevella and Mayor Laura Montilla widens apparent to be widening. What worsened it was the local Comelec's declaration that all their candidates for councilors were independent, since, together, they exceeded the limit of only 12.

That some of affairs doesn't worry Valdez, who quietly said she does not look to the party for funding. Those who are worrying are the city residents and voters who want to know where her funds are coming from, since both she and her husband are only government officials with no known sources of private income other than their salaries.

Peso falls to all-time low; Palace in panic

Front page B1

On the other hand, those earning dollars such as exporters were taking their time in converting them into pesos in the hope of getting a higher exchange rate later on.

Despite the peso's decline, the BSP said it was not inclined to intervene to prop up the currency, saying the country drop would not yet have a major adverse impact on consumer prices.

The ceiling in one-year BSP's treasury bonds' exchange traders said the local currency could further weaken to new lows next week.

Find its own level

"I think what's really driving the peso down is not only political uncertainty but also the current account deficit," Ateneo de Manila University economist Emilio Neri Jr. said.

"The next projected resistance is at 56.50 since we are so mechanized partners," he said. "That's the next target level."

"The fall in the week's low suggests that momentum (in favor of the dollar) remains strong," the trades said.

Another trader noted that the exchange rate would continue to be volatile while the Supreme Court is still deliberating on FPJ's citizenship.

The SC has been conducting hearings on a petition by Poe's opponents to disqualify him from the elections on the grounds that he is not a citizen.

Analysts have cited concerns that a verdict preventing the popular actor from running could spark violence.

Reassurances said he hoped the SC would decide soon on the FPJ case so as to eliminate the uncertainties frustrating the financial markets.

Weeks of confusion

Gino Guerra, senior chief staff officer of the Supreme Court, said on television that the high court may decide on the case some time in the next two weeks.

The Supreme Court on Friday began studying files on the eligibility of Poe to run in the elections.

Officials said a delay in the ruling could lead to weeks of campaign confusion.

"Pag jan (ruling) a lit de bit of uncertainty and problems," John McGowan, treasurer at HSBC Manila, said.

McGowan said the peso had always been subject to fluctuations but there was more room in January 2001, during the ousting of Joseph Estrada from the presidency.

It drew but a low of 51.75 per dollar and rebounded sharply to near 45 on a single trading day, when the senate held its vote.

The BSP chief had previously said that this recovery would gain ground to May or April as remittances and export earnings strengthen.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said there was no evidence the recent depreciation was caused by speculation among banks.

Black market

The major indicators of speculative activity, Tetangco said, were where the differential between the Philippine dealing system and the parallel or "black market" was wide or when there is likewise a big gap between local and offshore non-deliverable forward (NDF) markets.

Rewards refer to agreements to purchase currencies at a specific rate for settlement at a future maturity date for the purpose of hedging risks.

"This doesn't seem to be the case," he said.

Tetangco said the peso's weakening was also brought about by the strengthening of the dollar in the global market and the impression that the US federal reserve would intervene in favor of the greenback.

Jong Jong Wan, analyst of Reign Investments, said "political risk is the determining factor" for the peso's fall although workers abroad the bad state of payments were worsening the situation.

"If political continues is predominant, it might be useless for the central bank to try to prop the peso up, long said in a television interview here.

Save the ballots

"They might be voicing ammunition when sentiment is so against the peso as can might as well save the ballots for a more decisive move," he remarked.

"The central bank is caught in the middle ... if they have for certain the outcome, they would not but at this point the overall political landscape is rather fluid." He said the central bank may be concerned that raising interest rates would stifle economic growth but may have to step in if the peso continues to weaken.

Study this month, the central bank moved to protect the peso by hiking the liquidity reserves that banks are required to hold to 18 percent from 6 percent.

Spooked

The move was meant to stop up excess cash from the financial system and curb speculative pressure on the peso.

The peso has been weakening since last year after Poe announced he was running for president.

Survey from other clients has leading the presidential race, easily beating incumbent President Macapagal.

However Poe's strength has spooked the business community which is concerned over his lack of formal education and inexperience to public service. Poe has also declined to give details of his economic platform, leading even more uncertainties. With reports from Reuters, AFP

7 gov't execs fail lifestyle check, face charges

Front page A1

Ida Poe paragraph statement issued yesterday, the PAGC could is had slapped administrative charges against Press Undersecretary Cammie Reyes, Internal Revenue Deputy Commissioner Edmundo Galvez, Assistant Transportation Secretary Rene Magkaysay, Public Works Director (Region 8) Orlando Baron, his assistant director Oscar Orbeta, and a couple, Social Work Regional Director Ramon Schuh and Agriculture Regional Director Samuel Schuh, both assigned in Western Mindanao.

According to the PAGC, all were presidential appointees violated the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and filed incorrect Statements of Assets and Liabilities (SALs).

"They all failed to file true, detailed and correct statements of their assets, liabilities, net worth and financial and business interests, including those of their spouses and family members under 18 still living with them," the commission said.

PAGC Chair Dante Ramos said in an interview that details of the complaints would not be released until after the seven officials had received the commission's orders for them to respond within 10 days.

The orders were issued yesterday.

Unfair

But Ramos depicted the PAGC's act of releasing its statements to the media without first informing her and the others.

"This is unfair to me," she said in a phone interview adding that she had been filing her SAL religiously in all her years in the government.

Reyes has logged 41 years of service in Malacañang, spanning six administrations. She started off as an assistant in the Office of the President in 1962, during the administration of the late President Fernando Macapagal, and became the press secretary of his daughter, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I file my SAL—faithfully, even if I don't have much to declare," Reyes said.

In a separate phone interview, Reyes said he had also declared all his assets in his SALs.

"I am not hiding anything from the government," Reyes said. He said it was his declaration who had initiated the filing of the guidelines against him.

The other officials were unavailable for comment.

'Motu proprio'

Told of Reyes' background, Ramos slowly shrugged and said he did not know any of the seven officials.

He said complaints were sent to the PAGC by phone, fax, or mail. In other cases, the PAGC conducts an investigation "motu proprio," or on its own accord, he said.

"The PAGC does not look at the personalities involved in the cases. We look only at the evidence," Ramos said, adding that the commission dismissed outright those cases not backed by evidence.

On Thursday, presidential candidate Brother Eddie Villanueva said the PAGC had failed to curb corruption because it was working under the influence of the Palace.

"Everybody knows it is not independent," said the evangelist, who is standard bearer of the Bangon Pilipinas Movement for National Renewal.

Ramos yesterday expressed surprise at Villanueva's comment, but said he and the other members of the PAGC were content with the fact that "we did our job."

He said the commission had received 611 graft complaints as of Jan. 31, and recommended the dismissal, suspension, reprimand or disqualification from office of 79 officials.

The PAGC's findings and recommendations are sent to Malacañang for action.

Ramos said the commission could also charges be filed against ex-Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, whom the Palace subsequently cleared.

But Ramos said: "The PAGC has investigated (Perez) officials of the executive branch, and who before appointed to the PAGC's seats. Our recusal does not make the PAGC useless."

'Tito Ching'

Reyes, who was in Zamboles for Mr. Macapagal's anniversary, expressed shock at learning that she had supposedly failed the filing of check.

Her colleagues, members of her staff as well as Malacañang reporters also expressed disbelief.

"I took care of my name in all the 41 years I have served the government," she said by phone.

Reyes's mailbox said some people from the PAGC had visited by Office of the Press Secretary's personnel office to ask for her SALs for 2000, 2001 and 2002. See appointment papers and her service record.

Another Reyes's name is "Tito Ching" to veteran and new reporters who get to know her in the course of covering Malacañang.

Reporters say her office at the Kalayaan Hall is the most accessible in the Palace. With a report from Athel Labog-Arellano

Missing Pinay's body found in suitcase in NJ house

Front page B1

falling out in Costa Rica, the New York Daily News reported.

Police decided to search the house on 215-214 Elwood Ave., which was once owned by Fonilla, during an investigation into his whereabouts.

They found evidence that Cruz went to Fonilla for treatment on her tongue shortly before she disappeared, the New York Post reported.

Investigators interviewed Fonilla regarding the Cruz disappearance but could find nothing to connect suspicion, the Daily News said.

Around the time of Cruz's disappearance, police said Fonilla had several bags of cement delivered to his home. Police believe the cement may have been used to build a second platform on which to keep Cruz's remains.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Cruz moved to the United States in 1991 to work in Houston, Texas. She became a naturalized US citizen in 2002.

Cruz reportedly flew up to join a law level position at Citibank to a $100,000-a-year job at Barclay Capital's asset management group.

Fordham graduate

She was known to have been a bright student, graduating with honors from Far Eastern University in the Manila where she received her MBA degree in finance in 1996.

She also graduated as the top of her class at Maryknoll College in Manila.

Her parents and other relatives still live in the Philippines. Her brother-in-law Emmer Bercasio-Cruz said a flew to New York last year to help in the search for Cruz.

"I felt my world has begun to fall apart. We are devastated. We have to be strong," said Teresita in an interview after her arrival.

Relatives described Cruz, known as "Yin pay" to close friends and relatives, as a sweet and loving woman.

She was said to be very generous, sending money and gifts regularly to to her family in the Philippines.

The last day

Police and relatives were able to piece together the story of what was probably the last day of Cruz's life and posted it to the "Justiceforcristina" website.

Cruz was seen leaving Hess at St. Malachy's Church on West 49th St. at 11 a.m. by a former dormitory mate on April 13, 2003, the Post said.

At 1 p.m., she visited her office at 200 Park Ave. to pick up some files for a Monday team meeting.

A doorman at her West 69th St. building said he saw Cruz enter the lobby at about 9 p.m. on April 13.

On Monday, Cruz did not report for work and did not notify anyone at her office. Of-

Justice chides Comelec for separate FPJ opinions

Front page B1

During Thursday night's oral arguments, Senior Associate Justice Reynato Puno told Comelec legal division chief Alioden Dering that it was "strange" for the poll body to allow the filing of separate opinions, particularly by its new commissioners, Virgilio Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona of the Bandigan ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

The two, Puno noted, did not even participate in the deliberations that led to the Comelec's earlier dismissal of Victorino Fornier's disqualification petition against the standard-bearer of the Bandigan ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

"There are three commissioners who filed separate comments assailing the decision of the Comelec en banc. Is there now a new panel en banc at the Comelec?" the associate justice said.

In its 13-page comment, the Comelec urged the Supreme Court to dismiss "without prejudice to the determination" of Poe's citizenship, the disqualification petitions "for lack of merit."

But according to Garcillano and Barcelona, as well as Commissioner Florentino Tuason, Poe should be disqualified from seeking the presidency because he was not a natural-born citizen at the time of his birth as an illegitimate child.

"This is a strange proposition followed by the Comelec. Why allow them who did not even take part [in deliberations] to file separate comments?" Puno said.

The appointment of Garcillano and Barcelona raised local protests because of their alleged irregular election practices.

The first time

Under questioning by Puno, Dering admitted that this was "the first time" such a thing happened in the Comelec.

Puno also noted that in the past, it was the Solicitor General who took up the cudgels for the Comelec in cases before the high court.

But in this case, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo disagrees with the position of the Comelec's en banc. The position is closer to that of the three dissenting commissioners.

Garcillano and Barcelona said the fact is that Poe himself had admitted, particularly at pre-ad on his parents' marriage contract and his certificate of birth, the latter was an illegitimate child.

"Being born an illegitimate child, following the decision in Morano vs Vivo, Poe cannot be considered a natural-born Filipino since if his father, Allan Fernando Poe, is deemed to be a Filipino," Garcillano said, adding:

"In an illegitimate child, Poe's citizenship would have to follow the citizenship of his mother because he/she, who, Poe admits, was an American citizen."

Legal fiction

Garcillano said that while the 1935 Constitution did not expressly distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate children, the Supreme Court, in Morano vs Vivo, set apart only legitimate children from one of natural parentage, "acquire the citizenship of the only legally known parent—the mother."

"It is, therefore, a rule long settled by the Supreme Court that only legitimate children follow the citizenship of the father and that illegitimate children are under the parental authority of the mother and follow her nationality," he said.

Garcillano said the subsequent marriage of Poe's parents could not have transferred the citizenship of Poe's father to the latter "through the legal fiction of legitimation."

He said because under Philippine civil laws, citizenship was not included in "the bundle of rights conferred by civil laws to children who have acquired the status of legitimate child through legal fiction."

"Thus, even if it is argued that the effects of legitimation should be made to retroact to Poe's birth, the retroactive effect does not include the acquisition of Philippine citizenship. Consequently, it still remains that at the time of his birth, Poe was not a natural born Filipino citizen," the Gillano said.

Concurrence

In his own comment to the high court, Benipayo concurred with Garcillano's position.

"Applying this ruling [Morano vs Vivo] to the facts admitted by respondent Poe can only lead to the conclusion that since he was born an illegitimate child, he did not acquire the Philippine citizenship of his father at birth. Hence, he is not a natural-born Filipino citizen," Benipayo said.

He added that Poe, being an illegitimate child, should follow his American mother's citizenship.

Benipayo also said the 1935 Constitution defined a natural-born Filipino as one who "became such at the moment of his birth" and "by reason of his birth, not by naturalization or by any subsequent declaration by the law for his citizenship."

No reason

The Comelec denied that it had acted with out jurisdiction or committed grave abuse of discretion, saying it decided on the matter only because Poe was accused of material misrepresentation.

It also said it saw "no cogent reason" for Poe's outright disqualification based on his certificate of candidacy.

FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS SuperBrands Hall of Fame

SuperBrands Survey 1999
SuperBrands Survey 2000
SuperBrands Survey 2001
SuperBrands Survey 2002
SuperBrands Survey 2003

PILOT
NEW ERGONOMICALLY FLUIDSTYLED GRIP SKILL ROBUST PEN

PILOT BPS-GP

BPS-GP

COSMOS BAZAR, INC.
Philippine Exclusive Distributor
8716 Paseros St., Makati
P.O. Box 1603 Tels. 843-4011 to 14 Fax 843-4011
PILOT CORPORATION
Tokyo, Japan

Crash course on economics not enough–GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday mocked movie star-director Joel Lamangan for taking a course in economics, saying candidates without the economic experience would scare off foreign investors.

"For campaign is about clear and experience, not getting a crash course in economics [or] government," she said in a statement.

Asked to explain her comments, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye later told reporters that "running this country is no joke. It is not enough to have a crash course on short-term economics."

High school drop-out Poe, the latest runner in the May 10 race, attended a 10-month train-of-economics advisers this week to counter criticism over his lack of experience to public office or business.

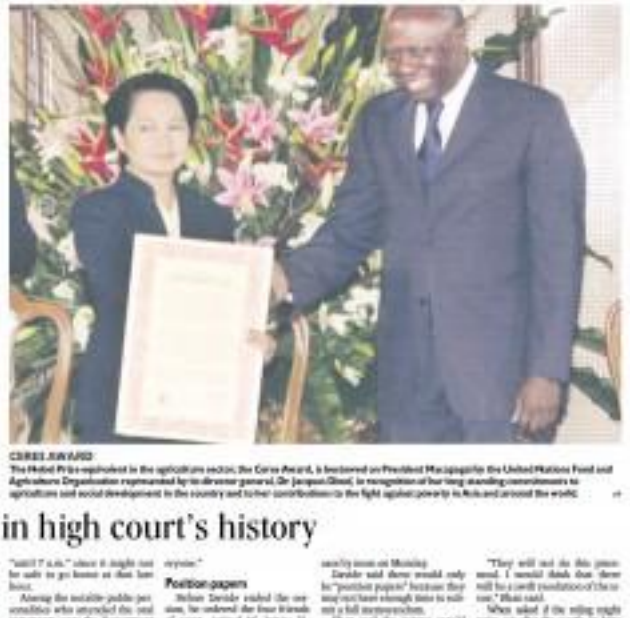
One of the advisers, prominent free-market economist Bernardo Villegas, later said Poe, 64, is now reading through economics textbooks in a bid to transmit way courses.

Macapagal, 56, a UK-trained economist, said that Filipinos have the most to gain by retaining her in power.

"With a strong international reputation, economic expertise and deep governing experience, I can deliver the change we need," she said.

"Where our opponents will weaken international ties and drive away international investors, we shall continue to maintain the high interest rate of confidence that has attracted billions of dollars in investments that have created new, high-paying jobs."

Macapagal, who came to power in 2001 on the back of a popular revolt that ousted populist movie star President Joseph Estrada, trails Poe by just under eight percentage points in the latest opinion polls. AFP



CORRIE AWARD
The Nobel Prize equivalent in the agriculture sector, the Corrie Award, is bestowed on President Macapagal-Arroyo (the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization represented by its director general, Dr. Jacques Diouf), in recognition of her long-standing commitments to agriculture and social development in the country and to her contributions to the fight against poverty in Asia and around the world. →

Longest ever hearing in high court's history

(Story on page A9)

trying to keep track of the intricate legal arguments being spewed about. It got colder when the crowd thinned as the day and the night went on.

The high court Clerk of Court Lazaro-Javier, who already wore a black cape over her suit, wrapped a scarf around her neck to keep out the cold when night came.

Some in the audience fell asleep in their seats only to be awakened by the loud arguments other chewed bubble gum to keep awake. Food and cellular phones were not allowed inside the session hall, but some enterprising spectators managed to slip in candy and snackies.

When midnight came and went but the arguments still continued, Duterde joked that it might be better if they went on "until 7 a.m." since it might not be safe to go home at that late hour.

Among the notable public personalities who attended the oral arguments were the Department of Justice's Merceditas Gutierrez, Representatives Soliman Baraquiel and Teodoro Locsin, and former Solicitor General Raul Gonzalez.

Duterde ended the session saying, "It had been a long day and a long night for us. Thank you everyone."

Position papers

Before Davide ended the session, he ordered the four friends of court—retired SC Justice Vicente Mendoza, former 1986 Constitutional Commission member Fr. Joaquin Bernas S.J., former UP College of Law Dean Alex Magbaleta, and UP law professor Raul Pangalangan—to submit their "position papers" on the case by noon on Monday.

Davide said these would only be "position papers" because they may not have enough time to submit a full memorandum.

He said the parties would also be those papers before they make up their minds on the case.

"They will not do this piecemeal. I remind them that there will be a swift resolution of the issue," Bunye said.

When asked if the ruling might come out after the court's en banc session Tuesday, Cruz said: "Not that soon but maybe after a few days."

'Legitimacy a non-issue' in FPJ disqualification

(Story on page A9)

born Filipino citizen.

"I see no reason why he is not only a citizen but also a natural-born citizen. He is in my view not only a citizen of the Philippines but also a natural-born citizen," Antonio said.

Magallona concurred, saying "paternity as a manifestation of blood relationship is all that is needed to be established" for the child to get his father's citizenship.

Bautista said the new Civil Code should apply retroactively to Poe if the law proves that his father recognized him, giving Poe his public civil right of citizenship.

Bautista said that the burden of proof rested with Poe, since he was the one "who seeks to establish himself as a legitimated child."

No distinction

Bernas said the Constitution "clearly says without distinction" that among those who are citizens of the Philippines are those whose fathers are Filipino citizens.

"Hence, what is needed for the application of jus sanguinis [citizenship by blood relation] according to the clear letter of the law is not legitimacy of the child but proof of paternity," Bernas said.

"As long as the parentage of the father is established, the Mother of that child to the father is sufficient condition for natural born [Philippine] citizenship," Bautista added.

Magallona noted that the 1935 Constitution, under which Poe was born, held that Filipinos are those whose mothers are citizens of the Philippines.

"The text of the law which ended 'those fathers are citizens of the Philippines' becomes an employment of the learned principle of blood relationship, which provides no reason for the matter of citizenship by legitimacy or legitimation," Magallona said.

"To introduce a distinction between legitimate or illegitimate is the status of the child vis-a-vis the declaration of his citizenship from the father defeats the constitutive essence of citizenship by blood relationship," he added.

Bautista noted that the law does not intend to "punish politically" children with the same stigma as Poe. "Blood rejected out of bravery passion is the same blood," he said.

Addressing the issue that Poe was born in 1939 and his parents were married a year after in 1940, Bautista said: "Paternity begins upon the fertilization of the ovum and not on marriage."

Decision soon

Despite his passionate appeal, the Supreme Court cautioned Poe not to television.

Bunye, senior chief staff officer of the SC, said in a television interview the court would decide soon. "Considering the urgency, its decision could be reached maybe within the next two weeks."

SC spokesperson Ismael Khan Jr., asked if the ruling might come out after the court's en banc session on Tuesday, replied: "But that must be maybe after a few days."

SC jurisdiction

Bernas and Bautista, who are experts in constitutional law, also said the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over the disqualification case.

"I submit, moreover, there is compelling reason for the Court to make its judgment now because the decision in the Poe judgment on [Poe's] qualification now will close the air and forestall the unwholesome possibility of a winner being later disqualified in the polls," Bernas said.

Mendoza said the high court has jurisdiction over the case. He said, however, that it should not against only Victorino Fornier's petition and not that of the two others.

The controversy were touched off by petitions filed by Fornier, Antonio Bautista and Estrella Elamparo questioning Poe's qualification to run for President.

Fornier argued that Poe was not a natural-born citizen because he was an illegitimate child of Allan F. Poe, a naturalized Filipino citizen, and Bautista, a Filipino citizen.

Elamparo, on the other hand, argued that Poe was not a resident of the country for at least 10 years before the May 10 elections.

Bautista argued that Poe's stay in the US as an undocumented alien disqualified her from establishing residency in the country.

Poe's camp has argued that the petitions were filed by "nuisance candidates" who only wanted to cause confusion among voters.

Poe's camp has also argued that the petitions were filed by "nuisance candidates" who only wanted to cause confusion among voters.

FPJ: Debate is just all talk

(Story on page A1)

Poe had earlier invited FPJ and President Macapagal-Arroyo to a debate, after the two failed to attend a forum sponsored by foreign correspondents for all presidential candidates last week.

Poe dropped off the calling, saying a debate is just "pamilak."

"Debates dumile [like] people. Baka pare sabay yun, mahi nahang magsigawa [Debates, that is pure talk, and nothing is being accomplished]," he told reporters.

All for show

He would only accept the challenge for a presidential debate if it would be held in depressed areas like Payatas in Quezon City where people would be allowed to ask questions.

"Kung sa loob lang sa aircon na basurote at television, radio sessions, dyanag sa lang papogi lang 'yan. If the debate will be held inside an airconditioned room, television and radio studios, I'll drop it; it is all for show), "he added.

Poe also affirmed that he is a genuine Filipino citizen, saying that the accusations hurled against him were political harassment.

"Sinusubukan na ang aking pagkatao at karakatan. Siyang lang nila sa mga ginagawa ng aking pagka Pilipino [They can make me give up my popularity and my stands but they can not strip me of being a Filipino]" Poe said in tears.

Pabor asked to trust on the President's wish to debate with those handing out the survey—supposedly referring to Poe—the entire thing replied: "Bahal kana! Pagdating sa dako, sangayan ka 'yan. [Why not? In the end, I will accept the challenge].

Mr. Macapagal has already expressed willingness to join the debate "any time."

All about class

Twice-day, the president took pot-shots at the lack of political and economic background of Poe, expressing fears that such can-

didates would drive away foreign investors and weaken the country's ties with the international community.

"This campaign is about class and experience, not a crash course in economics government," the President said in a statement following reports that Poe was given a crash course on economics by one of his favored trained advisers.

Ms Macapagal said she can deliver the change the country needs with her "strong international reputation, economic expertise and deep governing experience."

"Our opponents will weaken international ties and drive away international investors, (whereas) we shall continue to maintain the high interest rate of confidence that has attracted billions of dollars in investments that have created new, high-paying jobs," she said.

The spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said having a crash course on economics and governance is not enough for one to become President. "Running a country is no joke," Bunye said in a briefing.

Nautical highway

Ms Macapagal said she has created three million jobs in the past two years while her defeated predecessor only managed 500,000. She promised to deliver six million more jobs given another six years as Malacañang.

"We have created the nautical republic highway that unites the country, bringing the benefits of fast travel and the ability to trade goods to people from Luzon to Mindanao," she said.

She also promised to make sure every barangay would have a school with a computer by the end of the new three years.

"While corruption flattened in the past, for the first time ever, high level government officials have been made subject to autopsies thanks the recently impeached ex-chief justice and ex-ombudsman to people from their position," she said.

Less posters clutter up Metro roads

By Luige del Puerto

ELECTION officer summarily reported a dramatic decrease in the number of propaganda materials illegally posted in Metro Manila.

"During the election campaign of 2001, Metro Manila looked like a collage of posters, streamers and banners ... even plants and trees were not spared," said Lenyza Ramos Atienza, Ping election officer. "We are seeing little of that now."

Atienza, one feature of the changes in the office of the Commission on Elections to rid the metropolis of illegally posted campaign materials and the establishment which the media enjoys in the process.

During the 2001 illegal posters were all over the streets, almost every structure was covered with the last election.

Before, we had to talk to candidates before seeing down their posters," she said. "Now, no, person may remove posters. The police and the Metro Manila Development Authority have shouldered the effort."

Meanwhile, election officer Lenyza Inventor Balmaceda urged the public to report illegal propaganda materials put up outside designated areas.

"The law does not cover the whole city," Balmaceda said. "There is why I am asking residents to help us. We will take it from there."

THE MAKATI Traffic Enforcement Unit has released a rerouting plan for private and public vehicles passing through China Roxas/Sarmiento Parang Tuntol Avenue between J.P. Rizal Extension and Buendia Avenue, where the road improvement work for the avenue is currently concentrated. The map above shows the suggested route for affected motorists. Superintendent Gilbert Lacuesta said he discourages people would take other routes without up to March 31. Motorists are requested to avoid the area or to make alternate routes for time due to suspected heavy traffic.

VACC: Cons happy, but not victims

By Margaux Ortiz

THE RECENT decision of the Supreme Court to reopen the case of convicted kidnapper Roderick Lacuyan and Roberto Lara has set back the victims' quest for justice, according to the group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption.

"While we respect the decision of the high court's, we have to express that this recent development will cause more pain for the victims of the crime," said Dante Jimenez, VACC founding chair.

During a phone interview, Jimenez blames poor police work for the slow and inefficient delivery of justice.

He said that more policemen fail to follow up cases efficiently and prosecute the complete evidence to convict Acuna, as to the case of Lara and Lacuyan.

"I wonder why after so many years, it was New Bilibid Prisons chaplain Fr. Robert Dizgaan who disclosed the serving of the second accused ... for the arrest of the other suspects in the kidnapping case," Jimenez said.

Robert Lara recently answered to charges Cleofas and Medes Mabasang, one of the accused and the alleged mastermind of the kidnapping. Mabasang has since cleared Lara, his nephew, of involvement in the kidnapping.

Jimenez emphasized that the police should have scrupulously followed up the whereabouts of the suspects years ago.

"Once the case is reopened, the victims will become victims twice over when they appear again in court to testify," Jimenez said.

"While justice for the country is slow, failure reopening of cases resulting from poor police work will further it slow down," Jimenez stressed.

MetroBriefs

Stabbed 50 times

A 17-year-old girl was found dead with 50 stab wounds in Barangay Concepcion, Muntinlupa City. The body was discovered by 19-year-old Princess Cigarette. The police found a kitchen knife, a shoulder bag and a pair of shorts at the crime scene but have yet to determine a suspect. JOSEFA SAIRO

Killed in smashup

A CITY detective was tragic in Quezon City before dawn yesterday when a bicycle fell of passengers collided with a bicycle Emmanuel on of the Manila Police District. Emmanuel Alcayde, 19, was killed and her friend Sunday Sevilla, 23, Providencia Villas, 19, and Reynaldo Cardoso, 38, were injured. The bicycle was running left into Commonwealth Street from Aurora Road at about 12 a.m. when the van driven by Adrian Campos, 23, ran over it. Campos said the bicycle appeared from behind a truck and it was too late for him to stop. EDSON TANDOC JR.

Fire in Manila

A FIRE LAST night hit a factory along San Andres Street, Manila, damaged P100,000 worth of property. Yesterday night. No one was hurt in the blaze that began at 10:30 p.m. Firemen said an adjacent house was damaged. The cause of the fire was not to be known. LIAM TORRES

Hayridad warning

MAYRIDAD Motor Services Inc. is warning its customers against unauthorized collectors after more than 200 bill receipts were stolen from its office in Ermita City. The collectors impersonate Jordan Pinto Valdehuesa. Mayridad suggests that affected customers pay directly in Mayridad offices or to authorized payment centers or call 44-44-44 or 920. EDSON TANDOC JR.

Cop doubling as FPJ extra dismissed from service

By Tara Quinsaat

TWO POLICEMEN including an officer who had appeared on various reputable action flag Fernando Poe Jr., have been dismissed from service, according to the People's Law Enforcement Board of Manila.

PO3 Ernesto Herrera and Insp. Delfin Lacuesta, who had played the part of a gangster in several films starring the presidential aspirant, have been stripped of their police powers after they failed to show up in any of the hearings regarding their administrative case before the PLEB.

Lacuesta and Rebollo in 1999 had been charged with grave misconduct when they were both involved in the Valentino Police District Station 6 in Sta. Ana, Manila.

The PLEB conducted its decision after the members failed to hear from either Lacuesta or Rebollo.

Complainant Sotero Baconawa had accused the police officers—along with PO3 Ricardo Bonaventay and PO3 Romero Dupagan—of extending fair favors to San Andres Bukid, Manila and taking P50,000 in cash on the night of July 9, 1999.

The four lawmen denied that the house was being used for illegal gambling activities.

Macaraeg and Bigkigan, who attended the submitted hearings, pleaded their case before the board and were cleared of the charges.

Lacuesta recently filed a motion for the PLEB to reconsider his dismissal, citing that he was not informed of the hearings.

But the members of the PLEB found that Lacuesta was not subpoenaed to appear in the proceedings.

Reyes' Naktf secret weapons

ON TARGET
Ramon Joffe

THE BEST thing that ever happened on the crime scene is the appointment of former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes as chief of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, or NAKTF in short.

Reyes has done more as NAKTF chief than he did as Armed Forces chief of staff and defense chief. This is not to disparage his accomplishments in AFP chief and defense secretary but Reyes has extended experience as an anti-kidnapping czar.

One of his critics, Sen. Ibrahim Lacsson, a presidential aspirant, said Reyes would get nowhere as NAKTF chief because he was a military officer and did not have background in law enforcement.

Lacsson is now eating humble pie.

* * *

Almost every week, the public gets good news about the capture of communist kidnappers, thanks to the wanted list.

The number of kidnappings is dwindling because of Reyes' NAKTF.

The kidnappers are on the run. Intelligence they're on the run they can't get about their monthly businesses. The NAKTF keeps them always on the run.

What's Reyes' secret weapon?

Her what is, but what are his secret weapons.

One, he's been successful in making the public take part in hunting down the kidnappers by putting their faces or names. These posters are posted in places throughout the country where many people gather, such as public markets. Because of these posters, several kidnappers were captured or ran from hideouts.

Reyes has even made use of newspapers and television in displaying the faces of notorious kidnappers.

NAKTF gives handsome rewards to persons who tell on kidnappers. Big monetary rewards attract informants. Millions of pesos have been disbursed by Reyes' NAKTF to informants.

* * *

But the best secret weapon—and is still no longer be secret after this publication is the intelligence service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (IMAFP) whose job is to spy on communist and Moro rebels and their sympathizers. It is now at the forefront of the anti-kidnapping campaign.

Because of IMAFP headed by Commodore Theo Hamlet, every member of the rightist RAM, kidnappers are falling one by one. Target raid his man needs willing and military backup.

By the way, IMAFP was the most feared military intelligence unit during the time of President Marcos. With what it's done now, people should look at it more favorably.

* * *

One of the ultimate against Angelo Reyes when he was AFP chief of staff was that he was never a combat officer from lieutenant to major. Most of his early military career was spent as diplomat in posts abroad.

But the smart Reyes took advantage of his foreign postings by studying in the best schools abroad, including Harvard.

Because of his foreign studies, he can be considered an intellectual, few of his colleagues can match his intellect.

So, Reyes has put his brains to good use in going after kidnappers. The management degree he acquired at Harvard he has used by recruiting the right people for NAKTF.

Let's hope Reyes doesn't run on his laurels. There are still many kidnappers still on the loose.

Inviting all Bedans

GRAND ALUMNI HOMECOMING

Febuary 21, 2004 Saturday

Hosts

SILVER JUBILARIANS H. S. '79

GOLDEN JUBILARIANS H. S. '54

Buo ang Ala...
Sagap Mahal Bedista!

SAN BEDA

"May their fellowship never cease"

Be kind, pleads judge . . .

From page A19

stenographers' recordings on Feb. 26 and compare them to the court transcripts.

She also allowed the prosecution to compare the two—tonight to their trial tape recording, though she said the latter would be regarded as "unofficial" records. She had found the six tape recorders during the Saturday Bedding hearings and, on Jan. 15, ordered the tape recorder of the prosecution.

The secondary and the tapes were returned after the hearing. They were never as the prosecution's bases in saying that Garcia had been coached in the transcripts.

Yuhas also ordered the defense to listen to the tapes on Feb. 26 and file a comment on the prosecution's motion for correction.

Amidial told reporters that there were "obvious omissions" in the transcripts and they want to make sure that what transpired during the hearings would be accurately reflected in the transcripts.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Vilando

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2004

FOUR DIGIT
(for lotto result)
SUERTRES
3 9 6

MEGALOTTO 6/45
6 14 18 36 39 45

JV not allowed to rally, hits Atienza

By Luigo del Puerto and Tarra Quismundo

SAN JUAN Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito yesterday cried foul over the continued denial of his group's request to hold a political rally in the city of Manila.

"He is very selective," Ejercito said in criticizing Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

"This is political harassment," the San Juan mayor said. "This is already the campaign period. I have never experienced being denied of a permit to hold a rally during the campaign season," he added.

Ejercito, the son of deposed president Joseph Estrada by actress Guia Gomez, is the chair of the PMP-Estrada Ruling Plaza Para kay FPJ.

The group has requested to hold rallies in Bifiol, Tondo on Feb. 22, in Mandaluyong on Feb. 26, in Pasay on Feb. 27, in Manila on Feb. 28, in Bacoor on Feb. 29, and in Sampaloc on Feb. 28 but these have allegedly been denied.

The mayor said there seemed to be a deliberate effort to deny opposition groups, such as PMP-Estrada, a chance to be heard in Manila.

The mayor based reputedly documents which showed correspondence between Manila administrator Carlos Sabarillos Jr. and the Western Police District about the PMP-Estrada's request.

One document showed Tolentino asking the Western Police District to comment on the request.

In another document, Rafael Crispin, NPD-district deputy director for operations, recommended to deny Ejercito's group the permit for failing to present the exact venues of their gathering.

Crispin also noted that the rally would be held at 8 p.m., which is "beyond the allowable hours" from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

He added that the nature of the rally was not clear and the organizer did not specify the candidates who would join it.

Crispin added that there was information that terrorists might take advantage of the rallies.

"The reasons are flimsy. How could we hold political rallies during the day when people are at work?" he said.

But Atienza denied that he was selective, adding that everybody was welcome to rally in Manila, "especially the opposition," as long as the rally was coordinated with the city.

He explained that permit applications must be submitted to City Hall's permits bureau at least five days before the event.

FIRE SALE
Employees of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City make a run for it when fire breaks out at the Triple F restaurant inside the complex. The fire, scarred at 11:20 a.m. and was put out 20 minutes later. No one was hurt in the incident, an arson investigator said.

PHOTO BY LUIGI DEL PUERTO/PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Be kind, pleads judge handling Kuratong case

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

JUDGE Maria Theresa Yadao was in a good mood and she was a press release.

Three months after she dismissed the Kuratong Baleleng case, where presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson is one of the accused, Yadao yesterday appealed to the media to be "kind to the court and to the judge who has been under fire over cases."

Judge Yadao of Quezon City Regional Trial Court branch 81 made the appeal after she read a release that quoted parts of the "testimony and events" in the transcript of at least two hearings.

The press release, copies of which were distributed to members of the media who attended yesterday's hearing, found its way to Yadao through a reporter who unconsciously gave his copy to the court's clerk.

After the hearing, the judge called the attention of the reporters to the press release, which she said was "grossly unfair to the court."

The press release quoted one of the prosecutors as saying that the "grossly incorrect transcript of stenographic notes drew Yadao's incapability to judge the case objectively."

Prosecutor Jeerpee Aaro Bautista told reporters that they were "not commenting on his decision, but on the transcripts alone."

The prosecution has filed a motion to correct the transcript of stenographic notes taken during the hearings on Nov. 10, 2003 and Jan. 16, 2004, after the prosecutors noticed some omissions. The prosecutors also want to preserve the tapes that were used in recording the proceedings in question.

During yesterday's hearing, Yadao allowed members of the prosecution to listen to the

BUSINESS A-17

Manila lawmen search for Jesus

By Leila Salaverria

WESTERN Police District officials have formed a task force to look for the 300-year-old image of the Baby Jesus that was stolen from the arms of the Our Lady of Consolation and Correa statue at the San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila last week.

WPD spokesperson Chief Insp. Gerry Agustin said that members of the district's theft and robbery section, as well as Station 5 policemen, would make up the unit that would scour the city's antique dealer shops and collectors' lairs in search of the historical image.

The WPD spokesperson also appealed to collectors to report any information that would lead to the recovery of the image.

The image of the Baby Jesus was discovered missing after it was taken from the arms of the Lady of Consolation and Correa, which is located inside the historic San Agustin Church and overseen by church guards.

The Baby Jesus' head, arms and legs—all made of ivory—were taken. Left behind in the church's corridors were the image's silver crown, robe and clothes. The lady's image, which is made of ivory and wearing a bejeweled crown, was left untouched.

According to San Agustin director Fr. Pedro Gabriele the image was discovered missing the day before Valentine's Day. Church officials believe that the thieves hid in San Agustin's confessional when it was closed for lunch, then stole the image.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BSP survey shows RP firms still optimistic

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL business sentiment remained generally optimistic for the first and second quarters of this year, but the political uncertainties and peso depreciation were starting to dampen outlook within the National Capital Region.

Based on the results of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest quarterly survey on business expectation, overall sentiment remained favorable as indicated by the positive diffusion indices (DI) of both new respondents measured at 26 percent and 25.2 percent in the first and second quarters.

DI is computed as the percentage share of firms that answered in the affirmative less the share of those who replied in the negative. A positive DI thus indicates a favorable view.

The BSP yesterday announced that for the first quarter of 2004, the overall business outlook index increased to 26 percent from 24.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2003. This was due to the substantial improvement in business sentiment in areas outside of the NCR.

But business outlook in the NCR slid to 11.1 percent from 24.6 percent during the same period.

Indices in the NCR showed mixed results, with most respondents from participating financial firms in terminal and external financing.

Metro Manila companies were also less bullish with only 28 percent indicating expansion plans in the second quarter compared to 42.4 percent among firms outside the NCR.

As such, the employment outlook index for NCR stood at a negative 7.2 percent compared to the low percentage of firms planning to expand their capacity. On the contrary, firms outside of the NCR indicated a positive employment index of 7 percent.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the institution was encouraged by the fact that business expectation remained positive despite all the political noise that was denting the peso to historic lows against the US dollar.

"In a larger sense, this is a clear recognition of the generally healthy macroeconomic fundamentals of the country, such as the low and stable inflation rate, respectable growth outlook, reasonable interest rates and adequate international reserves," Buenaventura said.

To the extent that growth sustained consumption drives, the BSP chief said the business sector was correct in pinning positive expectations on the coming May elections since they bring business activity.

"So the survey results indicate, this would particularly be true in the areas outside the NCR where political campaigns are traditionally centered on higher pesos," he said.

Buenaventura said the BSP was also encouraged by the results that the estimated capacity utilization in the industry sector had moved up to 76.2 percent for the first quarter of 2004 from 75.3 percent in the previous quarter. This was likewise backed by the expected increase in average capacity utilization outside of the NCR.

Confidence indicators of business performance such as volume of business activity and business conditions showed largely favorable result in the first quarter. The confidence index was highest for the services sector at 25.7 percent, followed by the industry sector at 17.1 percent.

The outlook was bleakest in the construction sector, which showed a negative confidence index of 22.4 percent.

But the BSP chief said the institution would still need to be conscious of certain downside risks.

"There are expected to be faced by businessmen, including political uncertainty in the run-up to the elections, the usual competition coming from domestic and foreign competitors and the current volatility in the exchange rate," he said.

"It is a challenge for the authorities to ensure that risks to the business community coming from these factors are minimized, if not eliminated," he added.

The survey also showed that most firms were expressing an increase in prices and interest rates as well as a peso weakening, but this was consistent with the government economic targets were unimpaired for this year.

BUENAVENTURA

Court voids cigarette tax regulation of BIR

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE MANDAUE City Regional Trial Court declared null and void a revenue regulation that subjects to tax reclassification new cigarette brands, or those that have been introduced in the market after 1996.

This means that the Bureau of Internal Revenue will be barred from collecting higher taxes imposed on new cigarette brands classified under the revenue regulation. The probable cost to collect the additional taxes will take effect as soon as the court decision formally reaches the BIR.

The BIR said the court decision had not formally reached it yet as of press time, but the Insource Sun obtained the ruling signed by the presiding judge.

In a decision penned by Judge Augustine Vicol, the Mandaue RTC said revenue Regulations No. 22-2003 was issued without legal cause of its discriminatory provisions.

RR No. 22-2003 subjects only new cigarette brands to reclassification to higher tax bracket, making them more expensive than old brands of equal value. The new cigarette brands manufactured locally include Memphis and Astro of La Suerte, and Lucky Strike of the British American Tobacco.

The Mandaue court made the ruling in reaction to a complaint filed by a certain Cesar Tomotheocus, a regular buyer of Lucky Strike.

The BIR regulation authority the tax imposed on Astro and Memphis from P1.12 to P5.00 per pack. The reclassification followed a market survey conducted by the BIR which revealed that the net retail price of Astro and Memphis should fall under the tax bracket of P5.00 per pack.

The Tax Code imposes the following tax rates: P12.44 per pack for brands sold for P55-P8.98 for brands that cost P8.58 to P55; P6.60 for those that have a net retail price of P5 to P8.58, and P1.12 for brands worth less than P5.

The rule, however, exempts from reclassification brands that were already being produced locally before 1996 regardless of any price adjustment.

La Suerte earlier said it had lost a huge market share since the revenue regulation was implemented in September last year.

Although La Suerte admitted it had increased the price of Astro and Memphis recently, the company said the reclassification should also cover old cigarette brands that have likewise increased prices.

JBIC to finance port projects

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE JAPAN Bank for International Cooperation has agreed to finance some of the government port projects in Mindanao, according to the transportation department.

It said the projects identified for funding, which were among the 21 priority port projects of the department this year, would cost P1.8 billion.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said among the port projects that would benefit from the JBIC funding were the rapeseed the ports in Davao and Surigao, the Agusan del Sur's wharf extension, and the construction of the main shed in the port of Butuan.

Philippine Ports Authority general manager Alfonso Cusi said the government has identified 13 port projects last year. This year, the 21 port projects are scheduled for completion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the transport department and the Philippine Ports Authority to complete the P1.28-billion reclamation and access road project of the port of Dalipuran in Laoag City; the P83.75-million Davao port development project in Libuti, Albay; and the P80.72 million reclamation and wharf construction in the port of Batuhalan, Leyte.

Also in the priority list are the P295-million improvement of the Manila North Harbor Breakwater; the P62.9-million reclamation and widening of the JIC wharf at the port of Masbate and the P66.68-million port of Cotabato development project in Davao Phase.

The port projects are part of the administration's e-collecting Republic Nautical Highway program that aims to fortify the country's water transport system and decongest the roads and highways. Water transport is also considered more affordable than air travel.

According to Mendoza, other priority projects include the construction of passenger accommodation facilities at the port of Liloan in Southern Leyte; the construction of an RC pier and rockmolen at the port of Batangas in Batte, the extension of the RC wharf at the port of Cotoa and the port of Puerto Princesa in Palawan.

Credit stranding

BREAKTIME

Conrado E. Bautista III

THE BIR did not need our wild brand of politics, or the nonsense of bad loans in banking, or the rumors about the wedding of Mr. Silangan and a news reader, to drive away capital.

For that, actually, we only need the Supreme Court. Whether we like it or not, the Supreme Court is helping a great deal in damaging our credit standing abroad.

Shortships, the Supreme Court recently gave local taxpayers who are about to sign any contract, or get approved on anything from any government office.

Then you never tell what the Supreme Court may do, the moment the Supreme Court overdrives, ends the transaction, which it does more often than not.

* * *

HERE'S a perfect example—the $250-million offering of Meralco abroad. Word in banking circles is moving up to now is hanging, mostly thanks to the Supreme Court.

Originally, Meralco planned the offering for October last year. Today, the company is yet to enter the table papers, for an unbelievable fact: the Court today The offering is ... well, stranded.

The first stumbling block came courtesy of the government guarantee company called Philippine Export Import Credit Agency, a.k.a. Philexim.

Just when Meralco settled the issue with Philexim, the Supreme Court stepped into the picture to cause more delays. The Supreme Court made a ... well, ruling.

* * *

IT seems that Philexim had extending guarantee for some $250 million worth of loan of Meralco from the Asian Development Bank.

For that loan, Meralco gave Philexim some collateral worth about $2 billion. This, in banking, is called "overkill."

Then Meralco asked Philexim to share the collateral with the buyers of its $250-million offering, dropping the $2 billion collateral would still cover for just $250 million in Meralco dollars.

Typically, in the beginning, the state that Philexim acted in fear to cause delay to the Meralco offering by refusing to share the collateral.

* * *

NOW the investors in the Meralco offering were mostly fund managers abroad. Peats what I heard, they turned cold. Just as soon as the Supreme Court came out with ruling.

It involved the rate increase of 22 consumer rate kilowatthour that Meralco got from the Energy Regulatory Commission, as the ERC.

After the ERC granted the rate increase to Meralco, the Supreme Court took it back. The case is still pending, awaiting for a final resolution of the Supreme Court.

So far where the final resolution can come out, nobody can tell as yet. History shows us that it can take any where from several months to a little less than seventy.

* * *

ANYHOW, we grow up believing that, when it came to the power sector, the authority was actually the ERC. So did actually those investors abroad. We were all mistaking.

Today we actually do not know what body has the authority to decide on such highly technical matters as power rates—whether to raise or not.

Well, the ERC must look into a lot of things to decide any rate increase, using some formula which any longer than the celebration of Fernando the 2.

All that is now useless. The Supreme Court already took over the function of ERC, simply by ruling on ERC rulings. The Supreme Court is now the power expert.

* * *

AND so, based on word in banking, the foreign fund managers moved to ask fund banks which were helping Meralco in the offering, whether or not the ERC had the authority were power rates at all.

It seemed to them that, after the ERC decides on anything, it then must seek the "final approval" of the Supreme Court.

The local bankers of course told the fund managers that they had better started getting used to it. Under our Constitution, the Supreme Court would step into everything.

So fund managers that was easy enough to put money on the Meralco papers. They wanted to wait until after the Supreme Court would have given Meralco the "final approval."

* * *

IMPORTANTLY for us, the one, instance of Meralco, the company needed the money—all that $250 million and much more—quite desperate to upgrade its service.

And Meralco would not admit it, but it really needed the 22-centavo rate increase just to come on to the investors in the $250 million offering.

In other words, without the increase, there is no $250-million offering, and without the offering, Meralco can say goodbye to its business plan for 2004.

So can, it must appear, a good deal as upgrade its service. To you, it must appear, is increasing debts. So there, it must give its subscribers a little "refund."

* * *

REMEMBER that—On the hand—about P5 billion would go to tax down here, and about P20 billion would go to here up there?

The same Supreme Court made a ruling that Meralco must refund its consumers an "x" amount, which amount to be P20 billion.

This year, the company was supposed to refund its big residential customers some P5 billion, to which BIR has been taxing it.

The ERC originally wanted six months, but with its ugly mob Now, Meralco guess could not do the "refund" at but as the ERC decreed it should.

* * *

IT seemed that the rate rules agreed to most bullets, and from Meralco's point of view, the ERC's six months, they wanted a reasonable of 12 months.

Of course some groups just had to balk at the decision of this stupid good. So nothing ERC for agreeing to lengthening the refund period to 12 months. It's as if Meralco was getting all the breaks.

I'll tell you what—even at 12 months, Meralco can hardly make both ends of its finances meet. It actually agreed on the 12-month payment, because it thought it had the 12-centavo rate increase secured.

Unfortunately, it failed to take the Supreme Court factor into consideration. From what I hear, Meralco is now pretty much at as high-risk borrower, with a stock standing only a notch higher than "near default." It is on the verge.

2004 Unilever-Student in Free Enterprise (SIFE) National Exposition

The Manila Hotel and Bayview Park Hotel: 21-22 February 2004

programme

SIFE

What is SIFE?

2003-2004 National Board of Directors and Secretarial Officials

Chairman
Dr. Ramon Alcuaz A. Roque
Deputy Secretary General
House of Representatives

President and CEO
Dr. Robert F. Gallardo
President, St. Robert's International SHCI

Vice Chairman
Mr. George Sudo
Executive Vice President
CyberCity Teleservices, Ltd.

Corporate Secretary
Dr. Patrick Argosh
Executive Surgeon

Assistant Corporate Secretary
Ms. Nora Blanquet
Chief of Staff,
Office of Teodoro Ricardo Roque

Committee Chairmen
Membership
Dr. Manuel Pascual
CHED Commissioner

Finance
Mr. Howard Belen
Chairman and CEO
CHELSTOL Philippines

Marketing
Mr. Edmundo Lazo
General Manager
Unilever Blackmore BU 'A'

SPONSORS
Unilever Philippines; Coca-Cola Telecoms; Mr. Donut Marketing (Phils.) Inc.; Philippine Daily Inquirer; Shangri-La Executive Director Ms. Rose Tecson-Tanchanco; Ms. Executive Director Ms. Rose Tecson-Tanchanco; Ms. Executive Director Ms. Rose Tecson-Tanchanco; PSBA Philippine Airlines; Ayala Philippines; Manila Philippines; Pizza Hut Philippines; Philippine Stock Exchange; Philippine Airlines; Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company; Coca-Cola Philippines; Pepsi Cola; Phelps Philippines; Inc; Philippine Investment Inc; Global Investors; Mon; Total Sales; Bayan; Bonnie Hop; Coke; GMA; Philippine; Intel Business Executive Philippines

2004 Cybercity Teleservices-SAGE Philippines National Exposition

St. Paul College, Q.C. and Bayview Park Hotel: 20-21 February 2004

programme

Megaworld, AGI to develop Boni land

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ONE PROPERTY developer Megaworld Corp. said it would partner with Alliance Global Inc. (AGI) for its residential project within the former Fort Bonifacio military camp.

Sources said Megaworld would tap its newly acquired 41-hectare property from the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) for its joint development project with AGI.

The project, to be called McKinley Hill, is a 23-hectare residential, commercial, institutional and open-use complex that is situated close to Forbes Park and Dasmariñas Village in Makati City.

It is expected to be completed over the next seven years and funding for the project will come from proceeds from pre-sold lots.

Megaworld bought the 41-hectare property from the BCDA for P10.3 billion.

Megaworld entered into a memorandum of understanding with AGI last July to undertake a P5.00 joint development of the 23-hectare Fort Bonifacio. Under the MOU, AGI and Megaworld will provide in equal contributions funding for the development of the project as well as the payment of all government requirements for BCDA.

Disclosures

PHINMA Exploration Corp. announced the resignation of Leandro L. Pamintuan as director of the corporation effective February 1004.

***

BINGO Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 30 at the Makati Sports Club at 9 a.m. with record date on March 26.

***

THE BOARD of Bonanza Financial Network Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting from March to June 3.

***

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. disclosed that pursuant to its share buyback program, the corporation purchased 200,000 of its own shares at P1.82 per share on Feb. 19.

***

PEPTEL Philippines Manila Inc. disclosed that the company has not investment shares in Ma Bonaparte. Guidance committee will then appointment as internal auditory for the company.

***

DEVA Properties Holdings Inc. announced a P.015 per share cash dividend to all shareholders of record as of March 31.

***

CITYSAVE Savings Bank Inc. declared a P0.05 per share cash dividend to all shareholders of record as of March 24 and payment dates on April 2.

***

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Company disclosed that at the meeting of the board of directors on Feb. 19, Antonio O. Cojuangco was appointed his post as chair of the board of directors, Manuel V. Pangilinan relinquished his post as president and chief executive officer and was appointed chair of the board and Napoleon L. Nazareno was appointed as president and chief executive officer of the company.

***

A. SORIANO Corp. announced that Anscor Consolidated Corp. bought 11,000 of its shares on Feb. 19. Anscor Consolidated Corp. is a 100% owned subsidiary of the corporation.

***

ACRUX Pilots Hotel Corp. disclosed the resignation of Kenneth Ng (a.k.a. Ng Sung Tho) as director of the corporation effective Feb. 19. *Caption pilot by Raymond Ramos PDI Research*

Currencies

February 19, 2004 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Euro Equivalent
United States	Dollar			
Japan	Yen			
United Kingdom	Pound			
Hong Kong	Dollar			
Switzerland	Franc			
Canada	Dollar			
Singapore	Dollar			
Australia	Dollar			
Taiwan	New T			
Saudi Arabia	Riyal			
Brunei	Dollar			
Indonesia	Rupiah			
Thailand	Baht			
UAE	Dirham			
Korea	Won			
Argentina	Peso			
Kuwait	Dinar			
Denmark	Krone			
India	Rupee			
Malaysia	Ringgit			
Mexico	New Peso			
New Zealand	Dollar			
Norway	Krone			
Pakistan	Rupee			
South Africa	Rand			
Kenya	Shilling			
Sweden	Krona			
Chile	Peso			
Qatar	Riyal			
Venezuela	Bolivar			

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangosing
Assistant Editor Stella D. Gonzales

Groups want cancer drugs for poor kids

LONDON—Cancer groups are demanding that basic life-saving cancer drugs be made available to poor children who they said were suffering and dying because of lack of funds.

Each year around the world, up to 80 percent of the 250,000 children diagnosed with cancer die because governments that have increased survival rates in rich countries are not available, or affordable, to poor nations.

For example, according to the National Children's Cancer Society the survival rate for the most common type of cancer, acute lymphocytic leukemia, is 70 percent in developed countries but is only 20 percent in developing nations.

The group said cancer comes only second to accidents as the leading cause of death among children from birth to 15 years.

Cancer charities and patient groups said one way to help poor children would be to put basic cancer drugs on the World Health Organization's essential drug list so they would be given to children who need them.

"This costs sort of small: that is being used for 40,000 drugs should apply to these," said Prof. Tim Eden, president of the International Society of Pediatric Oncology, referring to moves to reduce prices and access to anti-AIDS drugs.

"There's an assumption that treating cancer is expensive, but it doesn't have to be. For some types (of cancer) it can cost as little as $217 to save a child," he added.

Inequality in treatment

Geoff Thomey, of the International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organizations which represents families of children with cancer and works to improve access to new and treatment, said only 20 percent of children with cancer worldwide receive drugs that could save their lives.

"Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to life, to treatment and to rehabilitation but where you look at childhood cancer there is definitely an inequality in treatment," he said.

The two groups and the British charity Cancer Research UK said campaigning and increasing awareness of the deaths and suffering of poor children with cancer is essential to tackling the problem.

They appealed to the G8 and the 49-40 to work with them to get governments and local communities involved, to improve staff training and to establish partnerships so leading cancer hospitals and organizations in developed countries can share their expertise with developing nations.

"Sharing that knowledge with doctors around the world can make a real difference to children's lives. A proper solution, however, requires a truly international response and it's important that we work to raise awareness of this issue both in the medical community and among the wider public," said Dr. John Toy of the Cancer Research UK. Reuters

GACP group: 300,000 children around the world die of cancer mostly due to lack of access to cancer drugs.

Eating out of cancer's way

By Rafael P. Castillo, MD

ALTHOUGH many cancer patients might have been born with defective genes that predispose them to cancer, there is no question that having the right diet may help prevent cancer.

It has been well-documented that migrants have a lower incidence of some types of cancer. Many think lum may that a diet composed mostly of plants, cereals and grains, and devoid of animal products will greatly reduce cancer risk.

If your family has a strong history of cancer, here are some dietary recommendations that may keep you out of cancer's way, as given by our dietitian friends from the Manila Adventist Medical Center (formerly Manila Sanitarium Hospital):

1. Eat 3-8 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

The medical benefits of plant foods are beyond doubt, whether in terms of cardiovascular disease or cancer prevention.

Successful cancer is significantly lower among those who eat raw fruits and vegetables. There are fewer colon cancer cases among frequent cabbage eaters compared to those who eat the vegetable only once a month or less. Oral and pharyngeal cancers are reduced by half among those consuming high amounts of veg-etables and fruits.

MEDICAL FILES

Soy, broccoli, beans

Soy products such as tofu, soy milk and miso have anti-cancer effects, especially against colon and prostate cancers.

Cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower have indoles that have benzopyrimine that treats cancer benzopyrene. This is protective especially for colon cancer.

Other protective foods are beans which can reduce cancer risk by one-third. Tomatoes have lycopene that protect against gastric and prostate cancers.

3. Eat fruits high in Vitamin A and C. Vitamin A reduces the risk of lung cancer. Some studies on beta-carotene, however, show conflicting results and do not yield conclusive beneficial effect on cardiovascular disease and cancer prevention. Cancer death is reduced by 30 percent among those who are high consumers of foods Vitamin A and C.

Plants that have high Vitamin A content are carrot, pumpkin, wished green peas, carrots and mangoes. Oranges and pomelo are high in Vitamin C.

A mere orange contains more than an average 200 carotenoids, much of which has protective properties. If one would simply depend on a daily pill of beta-carotene, he will then miss the other 199.

Right Vitamin C dose

For Vitamin C fanatics who gobble grams of this vitamin especially during the flu season, take note that although some health experts have advocated the intake of megadoses of this vitamin, perhaps its better especially among those prone to urinary tract stones.

Many experts agree that the 500-mg tablet is way too high, and the body actually needs only a fraction of this. It is therefore recommended that one get his vitamin through natural sources, that is, through food. Go for natural sources and you can save a hefty sum at the medical fee pay.

5. Take more fiber.

If you still believe that polished rice and refined food are better, think again. High mortality from colon cancer is noted in countries where population largely subsist on refined diets.

Fiber gives a lot of benefits.

It shortens gastrointestinal transit time. A refined diet will need approximately 77 hours to travel through the gastrointestinal tract, an unrefined diet will take only 33 hours.

Fiber also attaches to or adsorbs dietary cholesterol (which reduces blood cholesterol).

It also attaches onto bile acids. It was noted that nonabsorption have 4.3 times more bile acid production. Excessive bile acids (although normally reabsorbed in the body) have been associated with colon cancers to exist.

The increased transit time probably decreases the colon's contact with the bile acids. Several diets have noted that a high meat diet increases intestinal cholesterol and bile acids as well as anaerobic bacteria which in turn forms carcinogens.

Fiber also helps reduce sugar absorption among diabetics.

It's better to eat whole grains because they have high fiber. Eat fiber protects against colon and possibly breast cancer.

Good figure

4. Attain and maintain normal weight.

The waist-to-hip ratio should be 1.0 for men and 0.81 for females. Men should have a straight and equal figure. For women, the "pear" shape is healthier than "apple" shape. The waistline should never exceed 34 inches in circumference.

5. Cut on fats.

Total fat intake should be reduced to 20 percent of total calories. To reduce total and saturated fat intake, one should use only small amounts of lean fat or totally shift products and egg whites.

A healthy diet may take some getting used to but even just constantly reminding oneself of its benefits can make it as palatable and gastronomically appealing as a high-fat, finger-licking good diet.

JOBZ AT Resumé Central

Onstage Greenbelt

Nothing would afford us more pleasure than to bring you the first run of Resumé Central this year. The Inquirer's Job Market carries on to meet the needs of our jobseekers in finding the best and right jobs among the bunch.

On February 23 and 24, 2004, the Inquirer's Job Market will host "JOBZ Resumé Central" at Onstage Greenbelt in Makati.

Come to JOBZ: Resumé Central and get the chance to:
- Input your resumés directly into Resumé Reserve via our computers
- Get free Job Market copies
- Submit application to a particular company (Bring at least 10 to 20 copies of resumés)

JOB JOBMarket

There will come soft rains...

DISCOVER

Maurie Sanvictores Hudson

GRANTED fans Brandalo was speaking of tourists' wit when she wrote these lines. Still, with the dangerously low water level in Angat, the forecast of rain is probably more welcome than usual.

So, Ramon Alikpala, executive director of the National Water Resources Board, told the Daily Manila Shimbun, the problem is that the metropolitan population is growing but the member of water resources involving the new reservoirs.

Actions such as dead-ending have resulted in a rise of nearly a meter in the Angat water level, although the reservoir still doesn't have enough water to reach the "safe" level.

The good news is that according to the current National Geographic theory, scientists William Lau and Hsu-Tsu "Sunny" Wu of Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center tell us that tropical areas will be getting more rain than before. Surprisingly, we have global warming to thank for that.

Remember studying the water cycle in grade school? Water droplets from bodies of water like lakes or rivers or seas are vaporized by the heat of the sun. The vapor condenses and cools in the atmosphere, where the droplets group together and form clouds. Eventually the clouds are filled with so much water that the water falls back down to the ground as rain. This then slowly seeps back into the rivers, lakes and seas, and the water cycle starts all over again.

Warm, cold rain

What I don't remember learning is that there are two types of rain: warm, which occurs in the tropics, and cold, which is rainfall, and cold, which we associate with cyclones or heavy rains and is formed higher up in the atmosphere.

Until Dr. Lau. "In a warmer climate there will be more rain. And more warm rain will be associated with a more vigorous water cycle and extreme weather patterns."

Here's how the Nasa prediction works:

The precipitation efficiency—or the rate at which the water in a rain cloud disappears—of warm rain is much higher than once previously thought.

The reason? Clouds carrying warm rain toss up to 30 percent more water for every degree that the temperature of water at the sea surface rises. This also means that there will be fewer rain clouds left in the sky after a downpour.

Because the world's temperature are rising but enough to melt the masses of Kilimanjaro, frozen warm rain showers may actually become stronger.

But that's not all. The warmer water vapor feeds the atmosphere and those we know that have more water droplets are then created into the higher part of Earth's atmosphere, which in turn produces more cold and heavy rain.

Quick solutions

So can we expect more rain before the water level in Angat drops any further? Unfortunately the study doesn't give dates and times, and the water shortage is Metro Manila needs quick solutions.

Desalination, where saltwater is heated and the unflavored steam is condensed into water you can drink, is one option, especially as Mr. Alikpala notes that "the seas... has gone downstream the years."

In the long run, it may also be a good idea to check out the 100-pound water purifier the size of two small refrigerators that produces 10 gallons of drinkable water an hour on 500 watts of electricity that was developed by Dean Kamen, better known as the inventor of the Segway human transporter.

Kamen's machine is essentially a boiling cycle engine hooked up to a purifier. The heat from the engine vaporizes the water being purified and also serves as the power source to keep the whole system running. No chemicals or filters are required to purify the water.

Although the device hasn't received as much media attention as his other inventions, Kamen has already brought it to Africa and Kerala India in an attempt to power the sea-chine's viability.

Water today, tomorrow

In one episode of Seinfeld, a fish nearly dies for lack of water because a fish bowl was the closest an adult friend had to hand. Only when the fish tells the hero to turn off the faucet does the boy realize that he's drowning the fish's home.

We know that our forests aren't directly connected to lakes, rivers and seas, so we're not really going to drink their bodies of water the instances we use the faucet.

But we need to be aware that water is a finite resource and should be conserved.

So keep the fish alive, keep the clouds full of rain, and remember that the water you save today is water you can use tomorrow.

E-mail the author at rsanvic@mozcom.com.

SATURDAY Super 2

MC is not Shorthand for Misconception

Hip hop is what you make it, not what you copy from someone else.

More practical reasons to Cool Down.

Panasonic
Window-Type Air Conditioners

• Energy-saving
High EER (Energy Efficiency Ratio) and rotary compressor for less electrical consumption.

• Best value for your money

• Plus other superior features

• Free Panasonic Desk Fan

Panasonic
ideas for life

MC is not shorthand for Misconception

Rick Herrera
Age: 27
Origin: Cebu
Words to live by: Better to be hated than loved.
I can't go to bed without ... making sweet lovely books.
Best moment: Spending time with the one I love.
To me, hip hop is ... respect.

Ron Treyes Silva (Ronkadelic)
Age: 25
Origin: Los Angeles, California
Words to live by: Life is like a photograph.Keep developing through your negatives.
I can't go to bed without ... drinking a beer.
Best moment: Before I'm drunk. January 31, 2004.
To me, hip hop is ... art.

Nick "Gardner" Santiago
Age: 29
Origin: Hoboken, New Jersey
Words to live by: Be honest always.
I can't go to bed without ... saying goodnight to God.
Best moment: "When girls don't to make me erubble.
To me, hip hop is ... that talk a shit guy down.The infamous has a million stories that you can't help but listen to.

From page C1

personality rather than copy the videos of listeners or 50 Cent or whoever the rapper of the moment is. Hip hop in the Philippines needs to read between the lines of value rappers sing and portray and then understand rather than imitate. As rakits say on fours, the inner meaning lies deeper than what the artist may show. For example, don't go to a club and taunt "walking" if you don't know what the C-Walk is and where it came from, because if you did, you'd know why you shouldn't be doing it.

Hip hop should not be treated as a fad. It's a movement, a positive way of thought and expression. If you think you'll outgrow hip hop one day, you're involved for the wrong reasons. If you think you'll look back at hip hop and say, "What was I thinking?" then you're misreading it. Hip hop involves you in the music-ing you'll be proud of. It's not all-consuming. Someone who loves hip hop doesn't mean he can't love rock or classical or country. Hip hop is not a label.

The bottom line is, hip hop is what you make it, not what you copy from someone else. Hip hop is an expression of your creativity—what's on your brain, not on someone

ALSO ON C3

Jethro Casaca
Age: 19
Origin: India
Words to live by: It will be all right.
I can't go to bed without ... crossing my eyes.
Best moment: Right now.
To me, hip hop is ... a way of life just like any other.

Laurence Beau Chua
Age: 22
Origin: Toronto, Canada
Words to live by: Treat others the way you want to be treated.
I can't go to bed without ... tracin' v-cords.
Best moment: The day I was born.
To me, hip hop is ... a culture. I try to define hip hop my own way. I don't let it define me.

Film Festival

Featuring The Oscar's Best Picture nominees.

See the year's finest films once again at SM Cinemas

February 18-24, 2004

SM Megamall Cinema 7 - SM Manila Cinema 7
SM Southmall Cinema 6 - SM Cebu Cinema 4

Watch the 76th Academy Awards on March 1

SM Megamall Atrium, 10am
SM City Cebu Entertainment Plaza, 10am
The Megastrip, 1pm
Fiesta Strip, 1pm

FUJIFILM EPSON

Screening Schedule for February 18

SM Megamall Cinema 7	SM Manila Cinema 7	SM Southmall Cinema 6	SM Cebu Cinema 4
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

MC is not shorthand

[illegible] what's mind. Your hip-hop is where you can MC, B-boy, Tag, [illegible], or just enjoy hip-hop music and get musings to 'tell its stigmatized as a "hip-hopper." Now that may be rough in a country that loves to brand people and the music into categories, but hey, that's what hip-hop is all: mainly about....undying expression.

1 Sheena Vera Cruz

Age: 22
Origin: Manila
Words to live by: Anything worth it is worth working for/for.
I can't go to bed without ... the cellphone.
Best moment: Whenever I have more than four hours of sleep.
To me, hip-hop is... the best of life.

2 Chris Espos

Age: 22
Origin: Cebu and Los Angeles, California
Words to live by: Don't try to be [illegible] someone else, be united to yourself first.
I can't go to bed without ... taking off my mask.
Best moment: When I have a good time, or share with friends, or don't with family and/or leisure with my self.
To me, hip-hop is ... the best, the rhythm and the best of my soul.

3 Alice Ip

Age: 22
Origin: Washington, D.C.
Words to live by: Life is short, just like me!
I can't go to bed without ... thinking about my bunny.
Best moment: Meeting the TFC crew!
To me, hip-hop is... living it out!

4 Lenn Diaz

Age: 24
Origin: Philippines
Words to live by: Take chances! I don't live life thinking 'What if?' or 'Should a, should a, would a.'
I can't go to bed without ... my slow R&B music and thanking God for blessings.
Best moment: When I'm with my baby.
To me, hip-hop is ... a lifestyle.

5 Mary Ann Sanchez

Age: 22
Origin: Sydney, Australia/ Manila, Philippines
Words to live by: 'Ind Cor[illegible]thians 13:4-8.' 'A girl can't [illegible] what she wears and what she knows!' - Isabella Ruiz
I can't go to bed without ... reflecting on my day.
Best moment: Each and every glorious day I'm alive living life with the people I love.
To me, hip-hop is ... like Lolo. It's up to you which direction life. Why choose one if you can enjoy the rainbow?

6 Michelle Dato

Age: 21
Origin: San Diego, California
Words to live by: Life is [illegible] assume nothing, expect little, do more, work less, smile often, forget big, laugh a lot, play always, cry once in a while, live life.
I can't go to bed without ... smoothing my face.
Best moment: The silence of sunset.
To me, hip-hop is ... a culture you live and feel inside. Let the beat of the music take control.

Wearing the sun

Everybody wants to feel the bliss'

THERE is something about the month of February that pulls me right into the thick of the new year. January in Paris ended with a four-day mosaic of rain, hail and snow, leaving me unable to stabilize my moods, which fluctuated daily with the indecisive weather. Warm, tropical, extremely sunny Manila welcomed me with open arms when I came for a three-week holiday. It was just what I needed.

Hit my life was on non-pilot as I floated through the city surrounded by all the things I considered basic. This was especially important to me, the past few months had been quite overwhelming as I went through the process of what the title likes to call chaise-in-holidays. Two independence nearly to strangers, especially because nothing about it seemed on solid ground.

One bright yellow morning, after a grueling period of discovering the different aspects of living alone, a professor in one of my classes randomly mentioned the Korea Lizards Dynasty. He must have been mind-reader, and I might have been reading him some sort of spiritual-cognitive energy from the middle row.

Essentially, the theory is to be comfortable with what I discover about myself. I should go through a time of high stress. This refers to a period when I don't like what you are seeing, and I just can't take it.

The professor enumerated several steps in the process of shifting paradigms or perspectives. Moving offers the maintenance of being transported to a new world. Next comes exhaustion I drown in an odd maze of mind, picking out things about a certain culture and being there simply because they are unlike home.

This sounded so familiar. I had never been so afraid to face reality. I took comfort in being assured that people who underwent the most stress after moving to a new country adapted best in the end. Adapting was hard, particularly because some people tried to convince me that the only way I could do it was to let go of the Philippines entirely. Nobody knows how long it takes to finally reorganize with oneself, much less to a new environment. I realized that knowing where I'm from and making it a big part of who I am is liberating. I was freed by Pinay pride.

Paris has thus become more than just a nice place to live in, adore, or ill. In fact, it is easily. This is definitely a place where I know the total absorption of all. Anticipation to say that I have mastered the art of composing myself after sorting out the mail and finding a sticker horrific envelope stamped by the French Government, and I'm art of organizing significant allowance money into flavors because the things you can't wonder tons of are being broke and surviving.

I have experienced inhabiting on top some and hard bread as a result of costly irresponsibility... leaving the budget at does-anyone-music room, on phone bills, paperies, or haircare. Clearly (and sometimes literally), an can be worth a few cents or a couple of millions. I've been told that his online dispersals on the of fact that it has on the person engaged in it. We've all heard the saying, "Change if in experience." Well, this is one other subtle art I've been fumbling in. On my seventh month in the City of Light, and having learned quite a lot to such a short time, life has gotten awesome.

Although the transfer is such a typical rhythm for a new beginning, new boyfriend chocolate, and everybody knows it. As the band Notes Cabaret says, everybody wants to see the sun, feel the bliss. I used to reject the saying, "No man is an island." Does the Bible would laugh at me for yesterday! There would. BC life/country when I change. I take home, others without realizing it. Whether or not we try, things shift; nothing stays the same. Life gets hard for everyone, and no matter what the obstacle is, it's good to pull through. It's cool to be humble, to know my strengths and accept that, at times, I'll have for plain, useful, crap. Finally. Then I will know what's so good about having the sun against my skin.

KULIT CO.

KC Concepcion

Sleeping Beauty

Lemon-aide

Giselle Segovia

If we want more excitement, we should generate more enthusiasm

Saturday Night saw dozens—both aspiring and fully fledged—with the unmistakably frustrated-to-frizzy mien of musicians—Buenens and Judeza examining, colliding with the sensational D'Bello and co. Magdalene, Beverjane from the planetarium in the act, at first I was sure I was imagining it, for how could such a thing be possible? But I steadied my gaze. The vessel finally cleared and there it was: a person that will haunt me until a better one comes along, a heavenly lady garbed in classic black, in the midst of all the brazenness around her, dosed off right smack in the center of Greenbelt 2's al fresco area. With her lips smacking a cross that's slightly ajar, she was the picture of utter contentment and a weary-free life. Except the background was the typical noisy gourmet night of party animals.

It was fabulous. Her friends certainly couldn't stop laughing.

The night led me to the following explanations/conclusions:

1) The woman was definitely exhausted. Overwork is the most logical assumption. Yet she could not pass up on a chance to spend time with her friends. They seemed very, very close—so close that, when she woke up, she just had to smile sheepishly and laugh with them. Good for her.

2) This is surely a real life portrayal of the popular adage, "Work hard, party hard!" Only she slays through in party pun.

3) Gimmick life here has become boring and predictable. We need new ideas and innovative events, something that will both enrich and entertain ourselves.

4) Conversely Dress purposes should be worn—open to different possibilities. Our common mistake is, getting too comfortable with the mind. If we want more excitement, we should generate more enthusiasm, don't you think?

How the mind wanders! So now, here's how you can be occupied:

Saturday, Feb. 21

Finally! The Jason Mraz Concert! Only! way to be swept away by his songs. No crying, please. If you missed his show last night at Dish D'Grill, hopefully you can still score some tickets today in Ticketworld (891-9999). At the Mow Theatre, CCP Complex. Prices are by Basic Sarena, who else? For additional info (and maybe to buy), call Ticketcafe Manila at 361-6402.

If electronic pop is your thing, check out Frogpad, a trio from Rotterdam, France, at the Republik Theater of The Republic of Malate. One of the group's lead vocalist is a Filipina. The party, dubbed "Schubatuz Electronic Session," starts at 9 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 22

Calvin Klein's latest line of watches will be launched by Time Depot in Rockwell at 2 p.m. The new selection is fabulous. Models from the Professional Models of the Philippines (PMP) will be donning the extraordinary timepieces. Check it out for possible spending or, you can indulge in star-watching ...either way it should be fun!

Monday, Feb. 23

E-I-E-I-T sounds good. You can indulge in that before unwittingly say conversational-ly burning actions, such as working the treadmill? Gold's Gym will open a new base camp in Robinson's Galleria and they are already knee-deep in applications for membership. Sign up now, or you may find yourself in the predicament that my gay friend likes to describe as, "A monster on the lips, a bitch-tear on the hips!"

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Be aroused, awakened and inspired through the much-loved reggae music of India. I as the newly ejected Club V "Supercoo Pothead" to be Jamaican delegates, Jamaicans-Filipinos, or simply the Jamaican-thinking lot. Bob Marley followers united. Doors open at 10 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

I love Japan and everything Japanese...from food to fashion! I highly recommend that you watch this. The Okinawa Performing Arts, featuring the Shishi Fuyuko Dance Company and Ars Yukiko will perform at the Philippines Japan Festival 2004. This is brought to you by the Japan Foundation in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Believe it or not, everyone is free, but do call the Japan Foundation at 812-4213 to 14 for reservations. The show will be held at the Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (CCP Little Theater).

LEAD Blooming frontmen Jo Milgrina, a lead vocalist of Frogpad, one of Europe's hottest alternative pop acts. Victoria Rosenbaum and Chris Bolthe complete the band for a one night first party in The Republic of Malate tonight, courtesy of Alliance Francaise.

The Sleeping Beauty

and will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 26

Worry up as you can catch the last staging of Lino Brocka's Palanca award-winning Filipino play "Aguila." Presented by The Philippine Informal Theater Association and starring Buddy Cavalani and Mylene Dizon, the play is about human relationships ("aguasa" to break for "man of unknowing"). At the Dulaang Rajah Sulayman, Fort Santiago, 7:30 p.m. Call 810-0820/726-1807 for details.

Latin, pop 'round, at Nuvo, where BBE's "Bohemian by The Inlaw," will kick off at 10 p.m. The affair will have lounge time chosen by Antonio Griffin, Bianca Jereza, Rene Groppo and Tina Hammonds.

Friday, Feb. 27

We don't know for sure, but we heard about the Ong Queen Beach Mardi Gras thing sometime last week. Anyway, it was "Si Pong Sus" fashion. Imagine Os Chi Rodriguez in the flesh—except, there will probably be real gay men. Have a fantastic time! Bed is along Malis Orosa St., cor. E. Rafael St. Malate, Manila. Tel. No. 404-3662.

The Word for the Bored:

"Sorry? I don't feel like [the news]."
—Pete Rilloza, when asked to pose with K. Kelly after the Grammy's. He [unknown] to Paris. His Kelly was right behind her.

Flying High with the Equitable Travel Card

Equitable Travel Card flight attendant outfits were designed by Michi Calica-Soto for the occasion

Travel bugs fasten your seatbelts! With summer just around the corner, travelers can start looking forward to taking along the newest traveling companion on their next trip here or abroad—the newly launched Equitable Travel Card!

Ambassador Cesar Bautista, Rene Ramesentera, Judith Marie Dayrit and Antonio Go

Ambassador Cesar Bautista, Director, Equitable CardNetwork, Inc., Judith Marie Dayrit, Director Member Relations and Marketing, MasterCard International, Rene Ramesentera, President and CEO, Equitable PCI Bank, Donna Velasquez, Executive Vice President and Head of Retail Banking Group, Equitable PCI Bank and Annette Feliciano, Chairperson of the Travel Tour Expo 2004.

The synergy alliance of Equitable CardNetwork and MasterCard International aims to provide better and more innovation rewards for today's discerning frequent flier. To apply for your very own FREE Equitable Travel Card, you can call 867-7977 for more information. Plus, get a chance to win 1 of 3 trips exclusively from Cocoon.

Edu Manzano with (L to R) Beth Mijares, Joan Girang, Edmund Chan, Jojo Chan, Susan Lee, Nelia Cortes, Marie Viola and Tess Silber

With its inaugural takeoff at the Ski Megamall Hall during the Life Travel Tour Expo 2004, Equitable CardNetwork's Equitable Travel Card soars high above other travel mileage cards with its array of perks and unbeatable exclusive specials.

Dubbed as "Equitable Travel Card's Inaugural Flight", the Card's take-off confirmed Equitable CardNetwork's commitment to providing better value and service to business and leisure travelers. From "here till to tomorrow", the launch-related assembly let our guests were welcomed by **Bill Rana**, Vice President, Card Issue and Marketing, Retail, and **Cristina Balingit**, Card Issue and Marketing Manager, Retail.

The evening's host was with **Edu Manzano**, who dressed in the flight's captain. On his flight was luxury girl, **Gisella Sanchez**, who brought the house down in front of us as she ably portrayed the role of a beleaguered traveler.

As the evening climbed to higher altitudes, the Equitable Travel Card was cleverly unveiled from the latest series of Samsonite suitcases and was capped by smoke, a confetti blast and fancy footwork by **Mel Feliciano**'s dancers.

Teasing to be the new addition to the Equitable-Card's family were **Antonio Go**, Chairman of Equitable PCI Bank and President of Equitable CardNetwork, Inc.; Ambassador Cesar Bautista, Director, Equitable CardNetwork, Inc., **Judith Marie Dayrit**, Director Member Relations and Marketing, MasterCard International, **Rene Ramesentera**, President and CEO, Equitable PCI Bank, **Donna Velasquez**, Executive Vice President and Head of Retail Banking Group, Equitable PCI Bank and **Annette Feliciano**, Chairperson of the Travel Tour Expo 2004.

"La Turista Loca": Gisella Sanchez portrayed a beleaguered traveler.

Flying high: Hal Rana, Judith Marie Dayrit and Cristina Balingit